



THE INDEPENDENT

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WEATHER: Warm and sunny (R45P) 40p



IN THE TABLOID
**SUZANNE MORRIS
WHEN DAD IS
BORN A WOMAN**



Now it's a fight to the death

Blair warns Labour
as lead slips

'The election will be the last
fought on ideology and politics as
well' - Tony Blair yesterday

Anthony Bevis
Political Editor

Tony Blair last night presented the voters with the "nightmare" prospect of a fifth-term Tory government, as one opinion poll showed Labour's lead slipping into single figures - reinforcing this week's *Independent* constituency survey findings that the election was still wide open.

Repeating the message of Monday's Labour Party election broadcast, the Labour leader said during a visit to Luton: "You can wake up on May 2 to another five years of the most discredited, sleazy government, or you can wake up to a fresh start under a new Labour government."

Reacting to the narrowing of one poll, by ICM for the *Guardian* newspaper, while another by Gallup for the *Daily Telegraph* confusingly showed Labour's lead over the Conservatives widening to 21 points - an increase of five points since last week - Labour strategists decided to unleash the dire warning of the consequences of more than 20 years of one-party rule.

Labour is warning that if the Tories are re-elected for a fifth term, the voters can expect them to slap value-added tax on food, to sell off of old people's homes, and to abolish the state pension.

"This is the fifth-term Tory threat from a re-elected Conservative government and every voter should bear this in mind when polling day comes on Thursday next week," the Labour Party's campaign manager Peter Mandelson, said earlier.

But the frighteners were also being applied by the Conservatives, too, as both main parties entered the final stages of a do-



Dire warning: As the ICM poll showed Labour's support slipping, Tony Blair reminds voters they could wake up on 2 May to five more 'sleazy' Tory years Photograph: Ian Waddie/Reuters

or-die campaign that will see the losing party - whether Conservative or Labour - become embroiled in internal power struggles and bitter left-right re-creation.

The party was shown as a tree without roots - unable to stand up to the first puff of wind.

As workmen unsuccessfully try to keep the tree upright, a commentator says: "A tree without roots cannot withstand the slightest pressure. A party without roots doesn't stand for anything and, doesn't stand for long..."

But Mr Blair yesterday said he had been "squeezed" between forces that complained Labour was "principled but entirely unelectable" or "electable

but unprincipled. Presenting the possibility of an end of ideological politics, Mr Blair said at a London Press Club awards

lunch that next week's election was not just the last one of the 20th century, but probably, also, the last election to be fought on

the basis of ideology and politics as well." The Labour leader said that during the late 1960s Labour had "got stuck in dogma, and outdated ideology ... from which we spent the next quarter of a century escaping."

He said that the simplest way to explain what had happened was to put it in personal terms. "In a sense, I am modern man," he said. "I am somebody of my own generation, a generation that's grown up without

itics needs to be." While insisting that he shared the same basic values as Labour leaders of the past such as Keir Hardie, Clement Attlee and Harold Wilson, he said he had "liberated" Labour from the old prescriptions.

Mr Blair said: "The problem is that our opponents would say, and people say, if you don't stand for the past, you stand for nothing. That is the nonsense that is at the heart of the campaign against us."

He said that the elections of the future would be fought on a completely different basis. But that did not mean that there would be no battlegrounds.

"The issues of isolationism versus internationalism will be a critical dividing line. The whole question of the idea of society versus a narrow form of individualism, how we reform the welfare state ...

"The differences will be there, and they will be real, but they won't be in the same way debated and argued about as they have been."

John Major, campaigning in Scotland, said he believed "the whole United Kingdom is immensely stronger because Scotland is part of the UK and passionately believed that is where it should remain for the future." The Prime Minister said he believed in the Union was a matter of principle, whether or not there were a majority of non-Tory MPs north of the border.

"If we were going to go down the devolution route, and I understand the proud aspirations of a proud nation ... we would be heading inexorably for a conflict between an Edinburgh parliament and a Westminster parliament and independence for Scotland and the break-up of the United Kingdom we know it."

INSIDE

But why is Tony Blair apeing Norman Tebbit?
Andrew Marr, page 21

Election countdown, pages 9-13
Vanessa Redgrave on her move to the Lib Dems, page 21



Major faces the figures Photograph: Russell Boyce/Reuters

Crimes recorded by police			
Country	1987	1995	% Increase
England and Wales	3,892,200	5,100,240	31
Austria	291,291	486,433	24
Italy	1,867,035	329,110	21
Republic of Ireland	85,258	102,484	20
France	3,170,970	3,665,320	16
Greece	303,182	329,110	9
Netherlands	1,042,120	1,124,466	8
Northern Ireland	63,860	68,808	8
Switzerland	334,017	346,834	5
Sweden	481,230	68,808	4

Source: Crime Statistics HMSO 1995. The range of off-scores, covered differs between countries.

Europe's crime capital

Jason Bennett
Anthony Bevis
and Katherine Butler

Crime in England and Wales has risen at a faster rate than in any other European country during the past decade, according to a report published today.

England and Wales are far ahead of their nearest fellow member states in the crime boom sweeping the Continent. The sheer scale of that crime wave will be revealed today with a report from Brussels showing that international fraud is costing Europe up to £30bn a year.

An additional investigation carried out on behalf of the European Commission found that new forms of high-tech crime ranging from mobile phone cloning to "cyber swindles" perpetrated against insurance companies, banks, investment firms and public agencies have

evolved into a thriving business rivaling the narcotics trade.

The findings follow a year-long investigation by accountants Deloitte and Touche which concludes that differences in the laws of the European Union member states and the complete absence of any effective judicial co-operation allow international fraud to prosper on such a vast scale.

Details of the two reports emerged as the Tories sought to take their law-and-order proposals to the centre of the election campaign yesterday.

John Major set himself a fresh target on crime - so new that it did not appear in the Conservative manifesto. The Prime Minister told the party's daily election press conference that, if re-elected, he would deliver "a further reduction of 10 per cent in recorded crime over the next Parliament", repeating the 10 per

cent fall in crime that had taken place over the last four years.

But today's analysis of official crime figures is an embarrassing reminder to the Tories of their failure to control lawlessness in the period from 1987 to 1995. England and Wales come top out of 10 countries, far ahead of nations such as France, the Netherlands, Greece, and Switzerland. Scotland had the lowest recorded increase.

In the nine-year period ending in 1995 the number of crimes recorded in England and Wales rose by 31 per cent to 5.1 million. This was the highest total of the 10 countries examined in the *Criminal Justice Matters* magazine, although comparisons can be misleading because countries having different recording methods.

But the rate of increase far exceeded other countries which are often considered less law

abiding, such as Greece and France. The Government will take comfort from the fact that recorded crime in England and Wales has dropped by 10 per cent in the past four years, although offences involving violence continue to rise rapidly.

Dr Roger Matthews, Reader in Criminology at Middlesex University, who analysed each country's official figures, said: "Particularly bad news for England and Wales is that not only have we experienced the highest increase in recorded crime over [that period] but that this increase has been associated with an increase in violent and serious crime."

He argued that part of the reason for the high total in England and Wales was the large number of domestic burglaries and car crimes which have been running at twice the rates of other European countries.

Ancient Saxon tomb yields royal treasures

David Keys
Archaeology Correspondent

In what is being acclaimed as one of the archaeological finds of the century, the site of a royal tomb containing the remains of an Anglo Saxon king has been uncovered in the Midlands.

Academics believe the find, which includes the king's royal sword, helmet and ceremonial bowl, will shed new light on the social and economic status en-

joyed by the large number of minor monarchs who ruled sections of England during the so-called Dark Ages, a period immortalised in the 8th century poem "Beowulf".

It is only the second time this century that such a discovery has been made. The only other example is the Anglo Saxon king's tomb - complete with royal helmet - found in 1939 at Sutton Hoo, Suffolk.

The grave probably belonged to the ruler of a tiny kingdom

which historians suspect existed in the 6th and early 7th centuries. The tiny mini-state probably covered around 150 square miles and might have been based at two early Anglo Saxon centres, Ears Barton and Yardley Hastings in Northamptonshire.

In the latest dig, a team led by archaeologist Ian Meadows of Northamptonshire County Council unearthed a fine 90cm steel-surfaced iron sword and an iron helmet with nose guard,

crescent-shaped cheek guards and a wild boar-shaped crest.

The boar motif, a traditional indication of royalty, symbolised strength and aggression and was the emblem of the Anglo Saxon god Frey.

Anthony Read, antiquities conservator at Leicester City Museums, said: "To find an Anglo-Saxon helmet is a find of national importance - to find an Anglo-Saxon helmet with a boar crest on it is of international significance."



Saxon crown: the helmet

QUICKLY

Co-op break-up bid
The battle for control of the Co-op took a fresh turn when it emerged that the Japanese bank Nomura International had agreed to underwrite £1.2bn of debt funding to back Andrew Regan's break-up bid. Page 22

ITV soap rows
A row has broken out between ITV and the Independent Television Commission over criticism of the broadcaster's reliance on soap operas and drama last year. Peter Rogers, the ITC chief executive, told ITV: "The lot has got to stop." Page 3

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significant shorts

Ferries turn back as French fishermen blockade Calais

Hundreds of British travellers were forced to abandon their trips and turn back yesterday after French fishermen blockaded the port of Calais.

Two P&O ferries, *The Pride of Kent* and *The Pride of Calais*, turned round in the Channel to take their 600 passengers back to Dover. But *The Pride of Dover* managed to break through. The ship had been stuck in Calais as the dozen or so fishermen's boats were lined up along the mouth of the port. There were reports of similar incidents at Boulogne and Dunkirk.

A P&O spokeswoman said: "We believe it is a 24-hour protest and are hoping it will end sooner... From what I gather, they are protesting at an EU directive telling them to increase the size of the holes in their fishing nets." Police in Kent set up emergency stopping points on roads leading into Dover to forestall ferry traffic. About 2,000 lorries travel between Dover and Calais daily and the fishermen's action was condemned by the Freight Transport Association. Members are due to hand a giant invoice for 800m French francs (£100m) to the French embassy tomorrow for money owed to the UK and to European lorry drivers from November's lorry drivers' blockade of Calais. **Randeep Ramesh**

Inquiry into radioactivity scare

An investigation into a leak of radioactive waste was under way yesterday after a container was damaged en route from Trawsfynydd nuclear power station to the national waste repository 150 miles away at Drigg in Cumbria.

Magnox Electric, which operates the North Wales plant, maintains that the container was in good order before starting the 150 mile road journey earlier this month. On arrival at Drigg it was found to have radiation levels in excess of those permitted by operating regulations. Trawsfynydd was closed more than three years ago on safety grounds. It is currently being decommissioned, a process expected to last until the end of the century. **Tony Heath**

Father's outrage over lawyer claim



A French lawyer last night stood by his claim that Caroline Dickinson, the British schoolgirl who was raped and murdered on a school trip to Brittany, probably knew her killer and let him into the youth hostel where she died. But Pierre Gonzalez de Gaspard admitted it was not possible for him to be certain whether the 13-year-old from Cornwall had consented to sex with her killer, Caroline's father, John Dickinson, from newspaper *France-Soir* that his daughter died "during what she thought was an act of love". "She is not here to defend herself," he said. Caroline was murdered in a tiny shared dormitory in the village of Pleine Fougères, Brittany, on 18 July last year during a trip with fellow pupils from Launceston Community College, Cornwall.

GP charged with telling tales

A pub relief manager told a disciplinary hearing yesterday he was left "shocked and embarrassed" when a GP revealed intimate medical details about the licensee and his wife to staff and customers in a tiny back bar.

Robert Shephard told the General Medical Council's professional conduct committee that Dr Norman Shannon, 54, told - in a loud voice - that Mrs A had had artificial insemination. He also claimed that the GP of Water Orton, Birmingham, spoke of Mr A, who was away from work on sick leave, as having "stress-related problems".

Dr Shannon denies disclosing to Mr Shephard confidential details relating to Mr and Mrs A's medical histories without their consent and in a voice loud enough to be overheard by other customers and staff at the Cook Inn in Wishaw, Warwickshire.

Junior doctor dies of Aids

An inquest verdict of natural causes was yesterday recorded on a 28-year-old junior doctor who died from Aids after working at three UK hospitals. Olukeyode Fasawe, from Nigeria, was found dead in hospital accommodation in February, six days after going sick at the Royal Devon and Exeter Hospital. The jury at the hearing in Collumpton, Devon, found that post-mortem findings were consistent with homosexual activity. The doctor also worked at the Royal Shrewsbury Hospital, Shropshire, and Frimley Park hospital, Camberley, Surrey. Patients treated by Dr Fasawe, and considered at risk, have been contacted and offered HIV screening.

people



Dudley Moore: His star has faded in Finsbury since the success of *Arthur*

From the Hollywood heights to panto in Southampton

Dudley Moore, comedian, musician, sex symbol and Academy Award nominee, has signed up for his latest role, playing Buttons, in *Orlando*, in pantomime, opposite Danny La Rue, in Southampton.

At 55, it is his first pantomime role, and a distinct change of pace and lifestyle from Hollywood, where he has based his career for the last 18 years.

To add to the bizarreness of the career move, it is not even a pantomime which has secured a West End run. The show will start and finish at the Mayflower Theatre in Southampton.

It is 15 years since Moore received an Academy Award nomination for his role as the drunken playboy in *Arthur*. In 1979, he became an unlikely sex symbol, playing opposite Bo Derek in *10... itself a dramatic career change for one of the best-known faces on British TV in the 1960s, who had starred with Peter Cook in *Not Only But Also* - and before that had made his name in *Beyond The Fringe*, with Cook, Jonathan Miller and Alan Bennett.*

But for the past few years Moore's career has stalled. An American TV comedy show flopped, and the only headlines he has made have related to the trauma in his private life. His former wives include the British actress Suzy Kendall and American star Tuesday Weld. He has now filed for divorce from his latest spouse, Nicole Rothschild, after a stormy relationship. But while Hollywood audiences have turned from

him, the British public retains affection for "Cuddly Dudley" as he has always been known, and *Not Only But Also* remains one of the most revered television comedy shows. It now seems that Moore sees Britain as the best place to revitalise his career, even if he is beginning the process relatively modestly.

Later, Moore has appeared to be returning to his first love, music (he originally won an organ scholarship to Oxford), performing Mozart and Gershwin at the Royal Festival Hall and composing a solo album. But his abortive attempts to return to TV and film in the US show that he wants to re-establish his career as an actor.

Last night the *Mayflower*'s director, Dennis Hall, boasted of his coup, saying: "Dudley Moore is the biggest star ever to appear in British panto. I am told that Dudley has always wanted to appear in pantomime and I am glad he has chosen us to achieve his ambition. His style of improvisational comedy is perfect for panto."

A spokeswoman for ENB productions, which is presenting the pantomime, confirmed that it would only be staged in Southampton. But she added: "We don't believe this is a come-down at all. The calibre of the people who perform in pantomimes these days speaks for itself. We're just thrilled to bits that Dudley will be appearing."

Cinderella opens on 18 December.

David Lister

briefing

HEALTH

Artificial heart programme halted after trials setback

Britain's heart transplant programme suffered a setback yesterday with the announcement that doctors at Papworth hospital, Cambridgeshire have abandoned a trial of a mechanical device designed to replace the human heart.

The battery-operated pump, about the size of a grapefruit, was inserted into the chest cavity and took over the action of the patient's own heart. It was seen as a potential answer to the shortage of donor organs, whose numbers have fallen mainly because of declining deaths in road accidents.

Three of the devices were implanted in patients considered unsuitable for human transplants and two more were used in patients at the John Radcliffe hospital, Oxford, but all have since died.

John Wallwork, director of transplantation at Papworth, said there had been difficulties in recruiting suitable patients and worries about the device. "We now realise that the technology was not quite up to it," he said. However, the hospital remained interested in trying new devices.

The decision is the second blow to the heart transplant programme this year. Hopes that animals might provide an alternative supply of organs were dashed when the Government imposed a moratorium on experiments using hearts from specially bred pigs until more research has been done on the risk that they could transmit disease. **Jeremy Laurence**

GENETICS

Cloned sheep can reproduce

Scottish scientists expect to hear the clatter of tiny cloned hooves next month, following the news that the two sheep cloned before Dolly are pregnant. Morag and Megan, the two-year-old sheep which were produced by cloning from embryo cells - rather than a full-grown adult, as Dolly was - are due to give birth to lambs in May and July respectively, after the standard five-month gestation.

The news has encouraged the team at the Roslin Institute, near Edinburgh, which announced the cloning of Dolly in February. "It's a further demonstration that these sheep are perfectly normal," said Dr Harry Griffin, one of the project members. Morag and Megan mated normally, which means that their offspring will not be identical, as their genes will have mixed with the lambs' father's.

Dolly, the world's first clone from an adult cell, is now nine months old, and will probably be mated early next year. Some scientists had speculated that Dolly, unlike Morag and Megan, might have a shortened lifespan, because the cells used to clone her came from a six-year-old sheep - comparatively old in ovine terms. There were also questions about whether the cells' DNA blueprint might have been damaged in those six years, possibly giving rise to cancer. **Charles Arthur**



MOTORSPORT

Chequered flag for men-only racing

Women should be in the driving seat of Formula One racing cars, rather than acting as "brolly dollies" for men on the winner's podium, the RAC said yesterday.

The machismo world of motor sports has long seemed closed to women drivers. Despite no formal bar to entry, only 2 per cent of drivers who hold competitive motor sport licences in Britain are women.

"There is no discrimination in the sport so why not many ladies race is a bit of a mystery," said a spokesman for the RAC Motor Sports Association. "We do have one lady racing in Formula 3, but on a statistical basis there ought to be seven or eight of them," he added.

The RAC said the split among teenage boys and girls competing in karting was about 50/50, and it could not explain why girls gave up motor sports when they were older. **Randeep Ramesh**

MEDIA

Sex article falls foul of guidelines

A feature in a magazine for teenage girls, headlined "I Slept with 40 Boys in Three Months" has fallen foul of the new body set up to monitor the content of such publications.

Sugar, a wildly successful magazine that has revolutionised the girls' magazine market, was found to have "suggested that promiscuous behaviour was acceptable and something to boast about" by the Teenage Magazine Arbitration Panel.

The panel also upheld complaints relating to a letter, published by the magazine, about lesbianism.

The complaints were made by Peter Luff the Tory MP for Mid-Worcestershire. Mr Luff was instrumental in setting up the Arbitration Panel. He said yesterday: "This was my first exploratory complaint to the panel. It shows that the panel will do its job if people use it."

Sugar was launched in the UK three years ago. It was designed as a younger version of monthly grown-up glossy like *Cosmopolitan* or *Marie Claire* and its sales have exploded so that other publishers have copied its formula. **Paul McCann**

TRAINING

No substitute for the real thing

Workers learn more from on-the-job training than by attending courses or reading books, according to a new employment guide published yesterday.

The Institute of Personnel and Development said training conducted by a manager, supervisor or colleague was vital in developing skills and improving an organisation's performance. But policy adviser Mike Cannell said on-the-job training should be taken more seriously by employers.

"Too many companies allow on-the-job training to be carried out in a way which does not make the most of its potential, despite the fact that it can be an extremely cost-effective resource," he said.

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'Penthouse' tests limits of Kohl's sense of humour

Helmut Kohl is not averse to a bit of fun. After all, he can even laugh at pictures depicting him as Europe's puppet-master. Clearly, however, there is a limit to his keen sense of humour. That boundary appears to have been crossed by *Penthouse* magazine, which is being sued for its portrayal of the Chancellor's wife, Hannelore.

In a writ peppered with words such as "insult", "disparagement" and "invasion of privacy", Mr Kohl is demanding DM100,000 from *Penthouse*'s German publishers. The case is yet to reach court, but the First Couple (right) have already slammed an injunction on the company, preventing resale of the offending image.

The object of their displeasure is a cartoon showing Mr Kohl at the wheel of his official limo - so far so good - and his wife rising above the bonnet. This being a men's magazine, it is Hannelore's ample beauty which catches the reader's eye. The First Lady turns out to be the emblem protruding from the radiator grille. She is wearing nothing more than a pair of blue leather gloves, a string of pearls and a tassel across her shoulder.

Bill Brown found fame when his chickens started laying misshapen eggs. There were flat-bottomed ones, pear-shaped ones, banana-shaped ones and wrinkled ones; square ones, indented ones and one-inside-the-other ones.

It was a straightforward case of cause and effect - or chicken farmer and egg, even.

RAF aircraft fly over a farm at 600mph, only 25ft from the ground, prompting chickens to lay eggs in all shapes and sizes. Reporters at Mississippi's Radio Miss 103 get wind of the goings-on at Thorpe Road Chicken Farm, in Little Clacton, Essex, and hey presto, Mr Brown becomes "Uncle Bill", international commentator, charity worker and honorary ambassador.



One can understand that Mrs Kohl, a traditional mother who likes to be photographed feeding her husband or cute animals, would prefer not to appear as a *Penthouse* pin-up at her mature age. But when the couple took their complaint to Germany's Press Council, they were laughed out of court. The august body ruled that the cartoon was an example of "satire", a genre the Chancellor has found hard to appreciate in the past.

So unless a settlement is reached, the courts must now decide whether this is indeed a laughing matter. **Inna Karacs**

Farmer's eggstraordinary success

"I insult the Americans left, right and centre," said Mr Brown, 59, yesterday, explaining why he is such a big hit in the US. "I tell them how tight they are. I say: 'You people don't know if there's another world out there. You go over the border and you get a nose bleed.'"

"And I get a little bit saucy sometimes. One morning, on air, I said: 'Cor, ain't it bloody hot.' The radio station was jammed with people ringing up asking me to say: 'bloody again.'"

The locals can't get enough of him, he says. "It's embarrassing," he said, "I walk into a restaurant and before I've sat down there's a placard in the window saying: 'Uncle Bill's eating in the house.'"

In just an hour and a half, he can raise £85,000 for charity. His only regret is that his broadcasts don't work the same wonders back home. "It's a shame I have to go 6,000 miles to do it," **Clare Garner**

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ITV is told to stop the rot of soap opera



Kavanagh QC: Drama series dominating schedules

Paul McCann
Media Correspondent

The Independent Television Commission yesterday criticised ITV for relying too heavily on soap operas and drama to bolster ratings, prompting a swift and furious response from the broadcaster.

Peter Rogers, the ITC chief executive, in an unexpectedly hard-hitting review of ITV's 1996 performance, said "the rot has got to stop" because of the channel's increasing use of soaps and drama series such as *Cracker* and *Kavanagh QC* to fill its schedule.

But Nick Elliott, ITV's head of drama, hit back at the ITC describing its conclusions as a throwback to a time when regulators got involved in the commissioning of programmes. "It is a kick in the teeth," said Mr Elliott yesterday. "Drama does very well and it seems to me that they have a problem with us doing well: that they want us to do less well. Why aren't they doing something about Channel 5 being so lacky and running old films every night at 9 o'clock?"

The ITC's concern was prompted by ITV increasing *Coronation Street* to four times a week last year and *Emmerdale* to three times a week at the expense of documentaries, arts

programmes and children's drama. It also pointed out that dramas can often run seven nights a week at 9pm.

There's unease about the hours being devoted to serials

The effect of all this drama was a fall in the channel's documentary output. The number of *Newswatch* current affairs documentaries was halved to 18 across the year and led to the average amount of documentary

by six minutes a week to one hour and 10 minutes. "I don't mind being accused of being high-minded," said Mr Rogers. "Soap operas re-

quire a large commitment from viewers and there is some unease about the sheer number of hours devoted to serials." Mr Rogers said there "would be trouble" if ITV did not diversify away from its reliance on drama: "We want to see the crowding-out stop."

Comedy was also highlighted as an area of weakness for the network as a whole and the ITC asked the channel to make room for innovation even if meant pushing out popular dramas. Much of the quality of ITV's output was praised. It liked the Jimmy McGovern drama *Hillsborough*, and other programmes, including *Wilderness*, *Faith in the Future*, *Savage Skies* and coverage of the European football championships.

The ITC was especially pleased that violence screened before the watershed was halved and that screened between 9pm and midnight was cut by a third. Channel 4 emerged largely unscathed from the review, although *The Gaby Show* was singled out as "open to charges of crudeness and superficiality". It also noted the failure of Gaby Roslin's chat show and was worried about an increase in repeats which went up by 1 per cent to 43 per cent of its output.

The Glenlivet family have just discovered TV: they think it's full of smut

Gerard Burke

Jim Woods, a water bailiff, was one of the strongest backers of the campaign to bring television to the remote Scottish highland village of Glenlivet. But now he is concerned about what his children are watching.

Like more than 100 of his neighbours, Mr Woods has only been able to watch television for the past four weeks - since, after several years of campaigning and fundraising, a powerful new transmitter was sited above the village.

Some have welcomed its arrival with open arms. Others, including Mr Woods, have been shocked by the programmes being beamed into their homes.

"During the first week we scanned through quite a lot and I was absolutely shocked

at what was on offer. There is far too much smut and sex, even in the early evenings, and late at night it is not far off pornography," he said.

"*Blind Date*, for example, shows scantily dressed girls giggling over questions which are all about sex. This just sends out a message to children that they have to dress like tarts if they want to be noticed."

"Now the rule is that the remote control stays beside my chair and if I don't like what the girls are watching it gets switched over. We are not going to discard our family values just because we have a television."

Not everyone is suffering from culture shock. James Grant gets up every morning at six to watch the breakfast news. Often he is still tired from watching the late film on Channel 4 the previous night.



Mixed reception: The Woods family walking in the hills which until a month ago prevented television broadcasts reaching their village of Glenlivet

Photograph: Peter Jolly

The arrival of a free television from a local pensioners' charity has transformed James's life. Since his wife died nine years ago he has lived alone in a little stone cottage on the outskirts of Glenlivet, nestled among the wild moors. "He has now become an

avid follower of a host of soap operas, quiz shows, documentaries and current affairs programmes.

"I spend a good few hours every day with the television," he said. "I don't really think about what I am going to watch. I just take it as it comes. Sometimes if there is

something good on I will stay up after midnight to watch it, but I am always up for the news first thing in the morning. The television is very good for the election. I like hearing the politicians' views and what they plan to do."

Until just one month ago James used to spend his evenings alone playing the fiddle and the piano, but now he is too busy for this. "If the television wasn't here I'd just be counting my fingers every evening. There is not a lot to be done here once I have fed the hens and the dogs."

Jimmy Innes, 46, has not had time to watch anything himself. But he notices his children crowding around the television at mealtimes. "My sons watch more TV now that they can see what is happening. They have been following the snooker because they can see what colour the balls are," he said.

Chris Burns, the former headmaster of the local primary school, is delighted that he can now be sure of seeing both legs of important European football matches. He said that before the transmitter arrived, "you could watch the first episode of a series but you could never be sure of seeing [the] end."

Black frost casts its shadow over Côtes du-Rhône

John Lichtfield
Paris

One week ago all seemed sleepily content in the prosperous hill villages west of Avignon where some of the cheaper brands of Côtes-du-Rhône are produced.

The vineyards, as precise and peaceful as military cemeteries, were lush with leaves. After an exceptionally warm and dry spring, the vines were three weeks ahead of their normal growth. A big 1997 harvest, and a good, strong vintage, seemed likely.

That was a week ago. Two days later the overnight temperature across a crescent-shaped swathe of the French south, from the Rhône valley to Provence, fell to between four and seven degrees below freezing.

It was not an especially late frost but it was an especially severe one. Severe enough to devastate "thousands" of hectares of vines and fruit trees. The locals call it a "black frost": intense cold, followed by bright sunshine, which turns the growing shoots of the vines to powder. Up to six million

bottles of wine may have been wiped out.

The southern part of the Côtes-du-Rhône "appellation contrôlée" area has been especially badly stricken. One village, Suze-la-Rousse, has lost 95 per cent of this year's crop. In the Gard département 40 per cent of the vines have been damaged beyond recovery until next year.

Paul Giraudon, mayor of Cavillargues, in the Gard, said: "It's a disaster. We have seen nothing of the kind for 50 years. Some of our Côtes-du-Rhône will recover, but the vin

ordinaire is 80 or 90 per cent gone. And the fruit trees are dramatically affected."

Further south and east, around Toulon, the toll is almost as great: an 80 per cent loss of the table wine crop, 20 per cent losses of vegetables and fruits, especially apricots and strawberries.

The better known, and more expensive, varieties of Côtes-du-Rhône, nearer the river valley itself, such as Châteauneuf-du-Pape and Crozes-Hermitages have also been damaged, but not as badly as in the hill villages.

Since a similar late frost in 1991, producers of the more costly types of wine have invested in very expensive heating systems to prevent the ground temperature from falling below minus 2C, the critical point for the growing shoots.

Although the extent of the devastation may not be as great as first feared, farmers' organisations in the south are saying it is the worst calamity since May 1945. They are already preparing their claims for government, and EU, compensation.

The great freeze of 1991 caused enormous disruptions to the wine market, sending prices zooming, then falling. As a result, strategic stocks have been created to even out the effect of future shortages. The impact on shop prices may, therefore, be slight. But the income of the smaller producers - even with compensation - will take a severe hit in about two years' time.

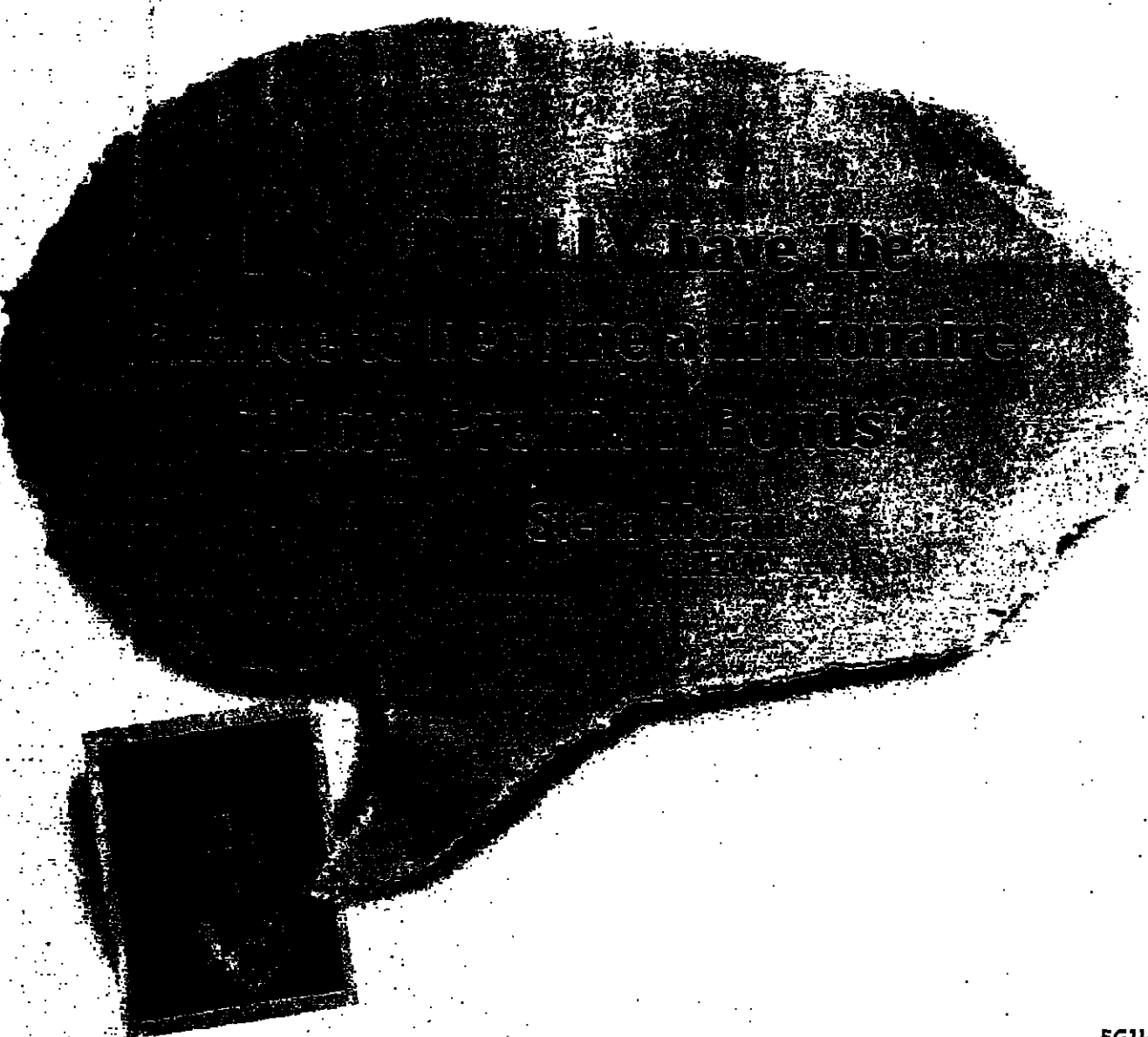
And the worst may not yet be over. Meteorologists were forecasting another severe frost in the French south east in the course of last night.



Fine wine: 95 per cent of the crop has been destroyed

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Bridgewater appeal is told of forged evidence

Patricia Wynn Davies
Legal Affairs Editor

A falsified statement in the 1978 Carl Bridgewater murder investigation was almost certainly the work of police officers, an expert Crown witness conceded yesterday in the Court of Appeal.

Dr Robert Hardcastle, an expert in document analysis, also agreed that a purported confession extracted from the late Patrick Molloy would have had to be recorded at an unusually high speed if the timings on the document were accurate.

The developments came on the second day of the appeal on behalf of the Bridgewater Four against their 1979 convictions for the killing of the 13-year-old, newspaper delivery boy which were based largely on the Molloy "confession".

Michael Mansfield QC, counsel for Mr Molloy, told Lord Justice Roch and Mr Justices Hidden and Mitchell that Regional Crime Squad detectives had not given a true version of how the crucial confession statement had been obtained and that Mr Molloy, a "victim of oppressive questioning by the police which finally broke his will", had been denied access to a

lawyer until after he was charged with murder.

James Robinson, 63, and cousins Michael Hickey, 35, and Vincent Hickey, 42, are on unconditional bail after an 18-year campaign to clear their names but want their convictions formally quashed by the Court of Appeal.

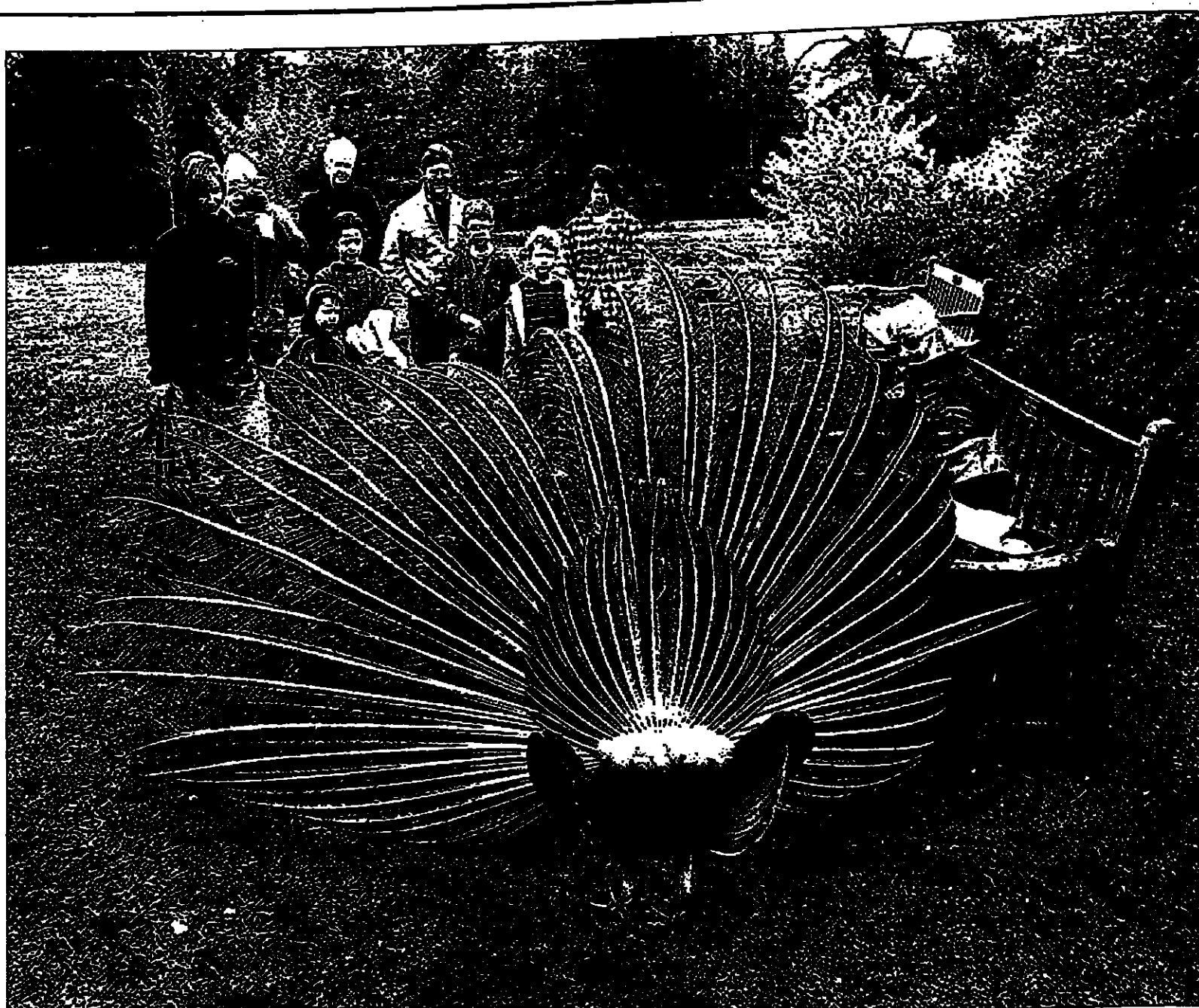
Dr Hardcastle, who was consulted by Merseyside police during earlier inquiries into the case and called as a Crown witness yesterday, was questioned over an electro-static deposition analysis (Esda) test he had conducted in relation to the statement purportedly from Vincent Hickey which Mr Mansfield claims police used as part of a deliberate strategy to provoke Mr Molloy into confessing. The test, which shows up indentations of writing, revealed that the statement had been written on paper resting immediately on top of the "confession", the crucial exhibit 54 in the 1979 trial.

Dr Hardcastle said after checking the handwriting of a number of officers, that the writing of Det Con Graham Leeke on the portion of the statement that had been preserved was the closest to the indentations on exhibit 54. Asked by Mr Mans-

field whether he agreed with Robert Radley, the independent expert called by the appellants, that the evidence was consistent with it having been written by DC Leeke, Dr Hardcastle replied: "Yes". He also said the signature in the impressions was different from Vincent Hickey's and, again agreeing with Mr Radley's evidence, said the writing of Det Con John Perkins was closest.

According to the officers' version of events, Mr Molloy made the confession during an interview with DCs Perkins and Leeke between 3.40 and 4pm on 19 December 1978, with Det Sgt John Robbins taking notes. The confession was then dictated, written, signed and read back between 4pm and 4.20pm.

Dr Hardcastle told the court that he had researched the speed at which writing could be made during police interviews, and had found variations from 44 to 155 characters per minute. If the timings in police records were accurate the statement from Mr Molloy would have to be recorded at 170 characters a minute but this, Mr Mansfield told the court, took no account of the fact that Mr Molloy was a slow speaker and pauses. The appeal continues.



Hide and seek: A curious crowd of onlookers gather to watch as a peacock appears to show off its magnificent plumage in the grounds of Kew Gardens in west London. But the grand display hides another bird cheekily taking food from a visitor. Photograph: Charles Milligan

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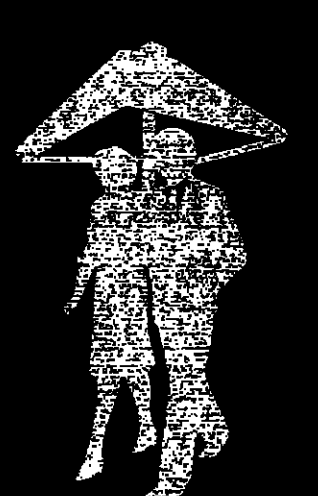
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Famine has its chips with suicidal potato

Charles Arthur
Science Editor

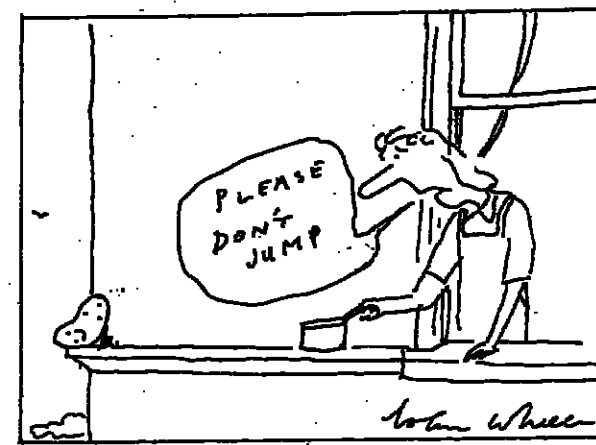
Potatoes could soon have an effective defence mechanism against the fungus which caused the Irish famine 150 years ago: self-destruction.

Scientists at the Plant Breeding Institute in Cologne, Germany, are using genetic engineering to give potato plants a "suicide pill" which would be activated when they are infected by the parasitic fungus *phytophthora infestans*, better known to farmers as Late Blight.

The result would be that although parts of the plant - possibly including some or all of its potatoes - would die, the infection would be contained.

Late Blight is a huge problem for farmers, causing an estimated £10bn crop loss annually and affecting 20 per cent of the world crop. It is also mutating into more aggressive forms, which are being spread internationally by imports to countries which suffer underproduction due to drought.

The new technique adds a gene that produces the enzyme barnase, which is a potent destroyer of essential nucleic acids



within cells. "It's lethal if it's inside a cell," said Professor Alan Ferstl, of the Cambridge Centre for Protein Engineering. "In nature, there's usually an inhibitor called barnase which prevents it functioning."

Barnase is normally produced by a plant bacterium, which uses it to gather nucleic acid constituents from plants it infects, so that it can reproduce. But the Cologne team is adding the gene for the enzyme to strains of potato plants. Normally when a plant is infected by the Late Blight fungus it starts to fight back in a limited

form. The altered plants produce barnase in the cells of affected leaves, killing off those cells and effectively isolating the fungus. However, when used in food and other products they would be indistinguishable from standard potatoes.

"It's really rather clever," said Professor Ferstl. "It's like apoptosis, the process of programmed cell death that you get in a normal cell when its DNA is damaged."

Trials of the transgenic potatoes are now under way in Germany, where they are scheduled to last until 1999.

Haughey's 'tea and cash'

Alan Murdoch
Dublin

Supermarket magnate Ben Dunne dropped in for a cup of tea with former Irish prime minister Charles Haughey after a game of golf, handed him three bank drafts worth £210,000 made out in fictitious names and said "Here's something for yourself" the payments to politicians inquiry in Dublin was told yesterday.

Mr Haughey had replied "Thanks, big fella," the businessman recalled during questioning at the second day of hearings at the judicial tribunal. The exchange took place at the Taoiseach's Kinsealy mansion late in 1991. Dunne said he had the drafts from an Isle of Man bank with him in his pocket for "personal use," possibly a family matter. "I was playing golf in Ballyrath and was very conscious of (the drafts)," Mr Dunne said. "Later I rang Charlie Haughey and said: 'I would like to drop in for a cup of tea with you'."

"At Kinsealy I got the impression that he was just not himself," Dunne recalled. The Taoiseach had seemed very depressed. "Under no circumstances did Mr Haughey ask (for money) or in any way say 'times are rough,' nothing like that," he said.

The 1991 payments followed earlier funds to help Mr Haughey pay off huge debts through intermediaries including John Fuzze, a Cayman Islands financier. Initial payment of £500,000 in July 1988 was followed by £150,000 and

£200,000 in 1989 and 1990. Mr Dunne said he was told Mr Haughey's debts were £700,000, but assumed his aid would reach £1m.

Mr Haughey, who has declined to be legally represented at the tribunal, has denied receiving funds from Dunnes Stores or an associate company. The tribunal heard that when discovery was sought of his bank account details between 1987 and 1991 Mr Haughey provided only

his wife's building society account book and correspondence with Dunnes Stores' solicitors in which he also rejected the claims.

Mr Dunne agreed with counsel for the tribunal, Michael Collins, that Mr Haughey never intervened on his or his family's behalf with any state body.

Earlier it was revealed that Mr Dunne's informal generosity had helped several parties, including Taoiseach John Bruton's Fine Gael party.

DAILY POEM

The End of Fear

By Ruth Pitter

When a man has cast out fear
All is indifferent, and dear.

When desire has fled away
Then the little mice can play.

Leaning against the cedar's bark,
Or on a bear's neck in the dark,

Or lying in the mighty grass,
He is saved from what he was.

He can lay his head upon
Another's bosom, or a stone,

And the stone is well beloved,
And the breast by love unmoved.

The flesh uncursed and the stone blest,
The breast a stone, the stone a breast.

Today's poem, from the anthology *Earth Ascending* (£9.50, post-free, from Stride Publications at 11 Sylvan Road, Exeter, Devon EX4 6EW), is by the first woman to win the Queen's Gold Medal for Poetry, in 1955, Ruth Pitter died, aged 93, in 1990; her collected poems are published by Enitharmon.

مكتبة من الأصل

Man who was born a woman loses fight to become a father

Michael Streeter

Campaigners for equal rights for transsexuals suffered a double blow yesterday after European judges rejected a lecturer's claim to be recognised as the father of his partner's children.

The European Court of Human Rights backed the United Kingdom's right not to regard Stephen Whittle as a father – even though he had been in a stable relationship with the mother of the four children for eight years – because he had been born a woman.

After the ruling, a disappointed Dr Whittle, from Manchester, held out the hope that a Labour government would amend the law, telling BBC Radio 4's *Today* programme: "They (Labour) have offered a pledge to take the matter on board... I'm sure we will see some change in the law."

However, within hours of the decision a Labour spokeswoman told *The Independent*: "We have no plans to change the law in this area at all."

Campaigners saw this as a rebuff by the party – possibly dictated by electoral concerns – following "private" assurances in the past it would be sympathetic to their claims, and the party's support for a Private Member's Bill on the subject last year.

However Dr Whittle, who underwent surgery 20 years ago,

said the pressure of litigation would continue, even though his own case had reached the end of the legal line.

"More and more people are going to be pursuing cases to the court demanding ultimate recognition. I am sure it will come in time," he said.

Later this year the Court is to hear an application by two other British transsexuals to be able to amend their birth certificates to register their change of sex. Yesterday's ruling in Strasbourg surprised some ob-

vention signatories and would allow the British Government a "wide margin" on interpreting the law.

It accepted the Government's view that while transsexuals can alter documents like passports and driving licences to reflect sex changes, birth certificates record the gender at birth and cannot be altered by subsequent events.

Dr Whittle pointed out this also stopped him adopting the children, who were conceived by donor insemination.

fare officer would have more say over who the children lived with than I would.

He added: "I think as far as transsexuals in the UK are concerned there really is an inequitable situation in relation to other transsexuals in Europe."

His partner, Sarah Rutherford, said: "I'm very angry. It's like a public denial of our relationship."

The case had been brought in the names of Dr Whittle, Ms Rutherford and their eldest daughter – known as X, Y and Z in the hearings – claiming the British Government's refusal to recognise his status as a father broke Article 8 of the Convention. The article guarantees respect for a person's "private and family life". The pressure group Press for Change, co-founded by Dr Whittle, said the ruling was a setback but was by no means the end of their efforts.

A spokeswoman, Christine Burns, said: "We will fight on and win one way or another – even if we take our entire lives."

Jonathan Cooper, legal director of Liberty, the former National Council for Civil Liberties, said: "[Dr] Whittle is a loving father and to deny him this legal recognition is a bitter blow. Mr Cooper added that a number of cases were in the pipeline. "It will only be a matter of time for the rights of transsexuals to be recognised," he said.

‘If my partner died, I would have no rights to the children’

servers because the court had, unusually, gone against the majority opinion of the Human Rights Commission, which advises the court. One campaigner said she was "in a state of shock" over the verdict and was now much less optimistic about the pending case.

The ruling also appears to conflict in spirit with a ruling last year by the separate European Court of Justice in Luxembourg, part of the European Union, which equated discrimination against transsexuals with sex discrimination. The Strasbourg court said there was a lack of agreement between Con-

Adoption required him to be married to his partner Sarah, which was not legally possible, he said. It meant that the four children – who have all been born since the start of the relationship and call him Daddy – had no father in the eyes of the law.

Dr Whittle said the situation meant he could not obtain information about his children from their schools or authorise medical treatment. "And if my partner, Sarah, died, I would have no automatic right to bring up the children."

"I find it very difficult to cope with the fact that a court wel-



Family man: Dr Whittle and his partner Sarah are determined to win the right to call him 'daddy' Photograph: NTI

Scientists change down to produce world's tiniest gearshaft

Charles Arthur
Science Editor

This will be the smallest gearshaft in the world, a billionth of a metre across and able to revolve 100 billion times per second, as envisaged by scientists at the US space agency Nasa.

The molecule-sized gearshaft, shown here in a computer simulation, consists of a cylinder of car-

bon atoms known as a "nanotube", with individual atoms of the organic molecule benzene attached to the side to form gear teeth. It is one of the first suggested practical uses for nanotubes, whose structure was first suggested by Sir Harold Kroto, the British scientist who won the 1996 Nobel Prize for Chemistry.

The Nasa scientists at the Ames research centre in Mountain View, California, have not yet built the

nanogear system. But they are increasingly confident that they could be constructed and form part of miniature self-repairing machines.

The idea is part of the growing field of nanotechnology, which uses structures at the molecular scale to build tiny, efficient machines.

"One practical use of nanotechnology would be to build a 'matter compiler'," said Creon Levit, one

of the Nasa team. "We would give this machine, made of nano-parts, some raw materials, like natural gas for example."

A computer program would specify an arrangement of atoms and the matter compiler would arrange the atoms from the raw material to make a macro-scale machine or parts.

Nanotechnology is expected to become a worldwide industry worth

billions of pounds once scientists break through the problems of precise manufacture.

Though it may take decades, they expect to be able eventually to produce self-repairing machines that could, for example, be injected into the blood to seek out and clean away harmful fat deposits.

Al Globus, one of the team working at the Ames centre, said "A step along the way to making an

aerospace 'matter compiler' is an even smaller hypothetical machine – the assembler/replicator."

"It can make a copy of itself from raw materials, just as a living cell can duplicate itself."

"Then we would write computer programs to make aerospace materials, parts and machines at atomic levels of detail. They would have tremendous strength and thermal properties."

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news

Gays prepare secret survey of the clergy

Clare Garner

Gay activists in the Church of England are to carry out a secret survey of Anglican clergy in order to pile further pressure onto the Archbishop of Canterbury, Dr George Carey, to abolish the Church's ban on ordaining practising homosexuals.

In a letter sent out today to 1,000 supporters, the Lesbian and Gay Christian Movement (LGCM) is urging gay and lesbian clergy to sign a confidential statement if they have been ordained or employed by a bishop who knew they were not celibate.

According to the Rev Richard Kyrle, general secretary of LGCM, it is an "open secret" that many bishops who signed issues in Human Sexuality in 1991, which includes the "no gay relationship" rule for clergy, have in fact knowingly ordained and employed clergy in same-sex relationships.

be the case with the majority of bishops," writes Mr Kyrle. "It is crucial that the hypocrisy behind this position is exposed, and that the bishops stop victimising in public the clergy whom in private they have professed to support."

Mr Kyrle assures respondents, who may or may not be members of LGCM, that their statements will be kept "in the strictest confidence". The purpose of the initiative is, he says, to "get a proper debate off the ground" at the General Synod in July, rather than publicly expose individual bishops.

The survey follows the bombshell dropped by Rt Rev John Baker, the former Bishop of Salisbury, at a lecture entitled "Homosexuality and Christian ethics - a new way forward together" on Monday. Bishop Baker, who chaired the group which produced the celibate rule for gay clergy, announced that he now feels "obliged to dis-



John Baker: Dissent

sent from that judgment".

"I cannot see that married heterosexual clergy have a right to deny their homosexual brothers and sisters the potential spiritual blessing of a sexual relationship when they themselves enjoy that blessing," he said.

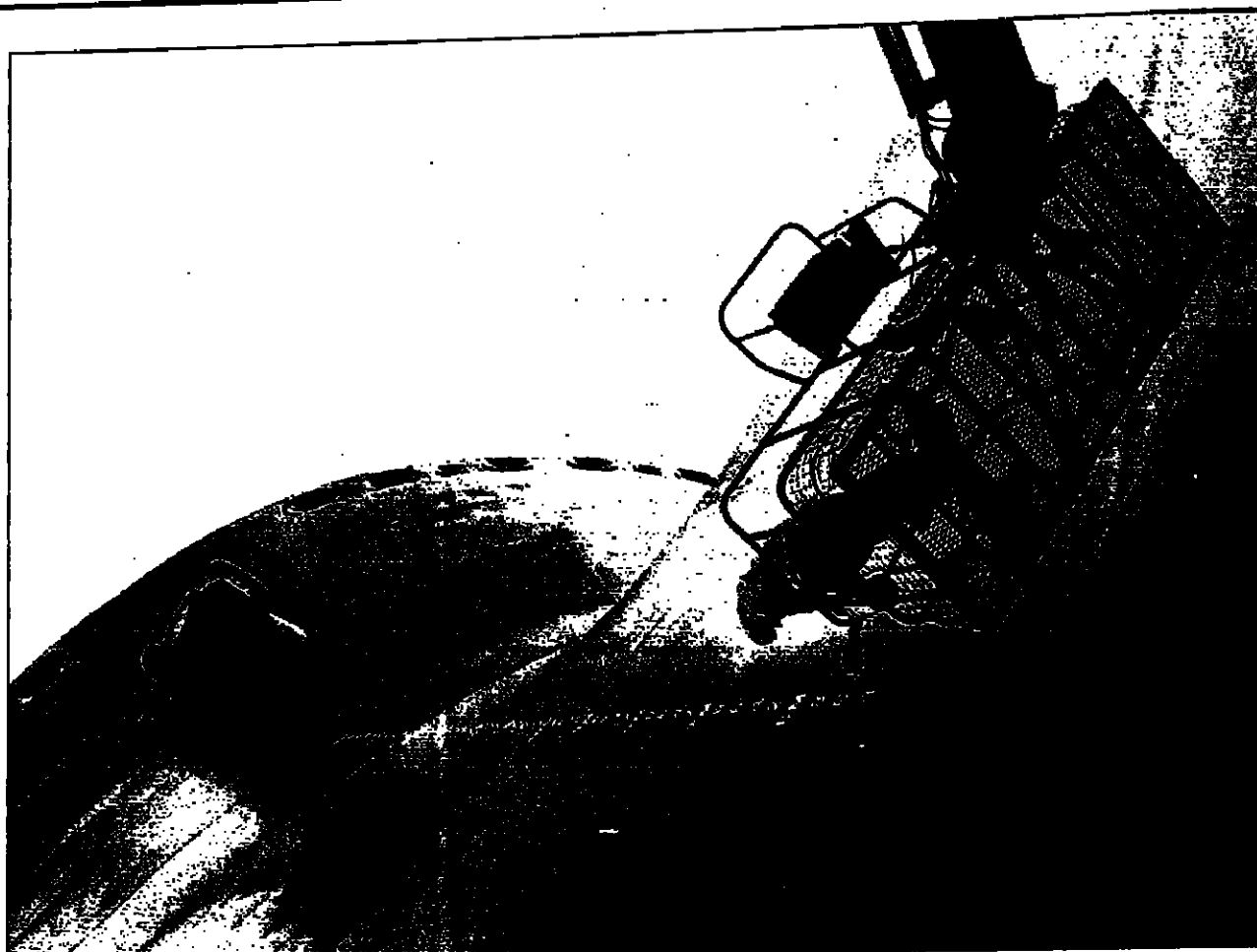
The results of the survey could provide the gay rights lobby with ammunition against Dr Carey, who only last Sunday reiterated his traditional stance. "Practising

homosexuality is not to be condoned in the priesthood," he said. "We recognise two lifestyles. One is marriage and the other is celibacy and there can't be anything in between."

The Bishop of Oxford, the Rt Rev Richard Harries, who chairs the House of Bishops' group, yesterday described Dr Baker's lecture advocating "gay marriage" as "a thoughtful contribution to a continuing discussion in the church".

Mr Kyrle has also written to the Archbishop of Canterbury to request a dialogue. "The rising degree of frustration among many within the Church towards your attitude is beginning to lead many to the conclusion that your refusal to meet has more to do with being obdurate than with a genuine desire to learn and listen," he wrote.

"If you wish to be believed when you say that you are not homophobic you must provide real evidence for this claim."



Tanker's makeover: A worker at the Harland and Wolff shipyard in Belfast finishing repairs to the Sea Spirit, renamed from Sea Empress after it was damaged when it went aground off Milford Haven, Dyfed, in February 1996. Photograph: Reuters

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Father wins court review for son bullied at school

Judith Judd
Education Editor

A father yesterday won permission to apply to the High Court over allegations that a school "closed its mind" when his 10-year-old son was bullied.

Mr W, who cannot be named for legal reasons, was given leave to apply on his son's behalf for a judicial review of the headteacher's decision not to take disciplinary action after the boy's arm was broken in the lunch queue.

Philip Engelman, who represented the family in court, argued that letters from the head and governors showed that the school had "closed its mind to this serious matter and the bullying that underlies it."

"There has not been a serious investigation of the underlying facts, or serious consideration of the harm actually inflicted on the applicant by other boys."

He said the head had made it clear soon after the incident that he did not believe there had been a serious assault. The boy, W, had received a spiral fracture in his arm which suggested that considerable force had been used.

His assailant had admitted: "I went and gave him a Chinese burn and he moved, then I heard it click."

A police investigation decided that the assailant might have been guilty of criminal assault but his parents, on legal advice, had refused to accept a formal caution. Police said there would be no prosecution.

In January, the governors

decided that no action would be taken against the other boy over the "accident". They said they were satisfied with the school's anti-bullying policy.

The local education authority later wrote to Mr W saying that a police investigation had not found "evidence of intent" to cause harm and no further action was proposed.

When W returned to school he had been isolated from other pupils and had not been allowed to take part in activities outside lessons.

The chairman of the govern-

“This was serious bullying which required serious action”

nors had written to the father saying that they would not tolerate a campaign against the good name of the school and its headteacher.

Mr Justice Forbes ruled that it was "an appropriate case" for a judicial review.

Outside court, Mr W said: "This was serious bullying which required serious action. My son is utterly shattered by what has happened. It is outrageous. On the one hand he has discovered the truth of British justice. A 10-year-old juvenile can do anything and doesn't get prosecuted and his parents are allowed to refuse a caution."

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news

Royal Ballet star dances away to a rival's tune

David Lister
Arts News Editor

One of The Royal Ballet's brightest and most acclaimed young stars has been lured by the radical contemporary dance troupe Adventures In Motion Pictures to star in its next West End extravaganza.

Sarah Wildor, 25, dances Anastasia for The Royal Ballet at Covent Garden, London, this week, and last week won a huge ovation dancing Juliet in *Romeo And Juliet*.

But the ballerina is conspicuous by her absence in the newly-issued programme for next season. A Royal Ballet spokeswoman said yesterday that she had been given leave of absence this autumn and would be returning to the company.

It is understood that Miss Wildor has been approached by Adventures In Mo-

yet in Britain to classical ballet. As Adam Cooper found with *Swan Lake*, the public's thirst for radical new treatments of the classics led to him starring at a West End theatre then touring to Los Angeles and New York. His girlfriend will be hoping for the same sort of international fame.

When Miss Wildor, then an unknown, burst on the scene four years ago playing Juliet at Covent Garden, one critic wrote that she was "quite marvellous, the best young Juliet I have seen since the days of Lynn Seymour."

Adventures In Motion Pictures was, until *Swan Lake*, a small-scale touring company with just eight dancers. Its international success has resulted in top dancers as well as audiences becoming more open to experiment.

Richard McDermott, administrator with AMP, said yesterday: "The divisions in dance between contemporary and classical are becoming blurred particularly in London."

"You no longer have to earn your spurs with The Royal Ballet. Great dancers want to dance with contemporary companies such as ours."

Neither the Royal Ballet nor AMP would officially confirm that Miss Wildor will be moving from one company to the other temporarily. But insiders say an announcement will be made in the next few days.

The Royal Ballet is enjoying a particularly exciting time for producing star performers, and not surprisingly, some of them are beginning to want to spread their wings. If Ms Wildor, like Adam Cooper, were to decide to leave the Royal Ballet permanently it would be a blow to the company. But a company insider said yesterday: "We could not stand in Sarah's way over this and we are confident she will return. The opportunity to create a role in the West End does not come along very often."

The Royal Ballet will open its new season at the Labatts Apollo in Hammersmith, west London, this autumn when the Royal Opera House will be closed for redevelopment. The company will sign off from its Covent Garden home for two years with a gala performance in July.



Career leap: Ballerina Sarah Wildor rehearsing at the Royal Ballet. She will be dancing Cinderella with the Adventures in Motion Pictures company this autumn
Photograph: Laurie Lewis

Pet cruelty cases double, RSPCA says

Simon Reeve

The number of people jailed for cruelty to animals last year increased by more than 100 per cent compared with 1995, according to figures released by the RSPCA yesterday.

The charity revealed at a conference in London yesterday that convictions for cruelty to dogs increased to nearly 900 while convictions for the mistreatment of cats, which have passed man's best friend as the nation's most popular pet, increased by 27 per cent.

"It is shocking that cat cruelty has risen so steeply," said Richard Davies, the RSPCA's chief officer of the inspectorate, who accused the government of "dragging its feet" over measures that would discourage people from abusing animals.

"People will do anything to them, including stabbing, kicking, punching, shooting and starving," Mr Davies said.

He added that politicians were not giving enough guidance to the judiciary to encourage them to ban cruel pet owners from keeping animals. "There needs to be a change in the law to define magistrates' power and give them the discretion of banning a cruel pet owner from keeping animals."

The RSPCA's statistics showed that 55 people received prison sentences last year for

League of suffering

RSPCA National Cruelty Statistics for 1996

Convictions - 2,282
Banning orders - 681
Phone calls received - 1,303,481
Cruelty complaints investigated - 101,751
Rescues - 6,932
Animal collections - 115,338
Cruelty to cats - 235
Cruelty to dogs - 882
Cruelty to horses and donkeys - 126
Cruelty to cattle - 186
Cruelty to sheep - 168
Cruelty to pigs - 65
Cruelty to wildlife - 121

mistreating animals, compared with 23 in 1995. Inspectors received more than 1.3 million telephone calls from the public and investigated more than 100,000 complaints.

Poppet, a black and white collie, who bounded happily around the conference was paraded to illustrate the problem. Last year he was not expected to live after being left by his owner suffering a broken leg and burns. But a neighbour in Banbury, Oxfordshire, called the RSPCA and the owner, Norman Hobson, was convicted of cruelty and neglect.

Keeping tags on dogs

Every dog should have a microchip inserted in the scruff of its neck, speakers will argue today at a conference in Stansted, Essex, devoted to electronic identification of pets, writes Nicholas Schoon.

The tiny devices, the size of a grain of rice, remain in the animal for life. Another device, the reader, detects the unique number in each chip from outside the dog's body.

In Britain the Kennel Club keeps a database for the 250,000 dogs which have been microchipped, giving their owners' addresses.

Less than 5 per cent of UK dogs have been microchipped to date. The devices, which cost about £20, are injected into the thin layer of fat just below the skin using a special syringe.

Animal welfare organisations have long argued for a compulsory, nationwide registration scheme for all dogs. This would reduce the number of bad, irresponsible owners and strays. They have failed to persuade government to legislate, except for particularly dangerous breeds like the pit bull.

Great dancers want to dance with companies such as ours

tion Pictures to play Cinderella in a radical reworking of the ballet to be presented in London's West End this autumn. Last year the company staged the much praised all-male *Swan Lake* with Royal Ballet dancer Adam Cooper. It became the first full-length ballet to be staged in the West End for over 50 years, and was televised at Christmas.

Mr Cooper, who is Miss Wildor's boyfriend, has since decided to leave the Royal Ballet and tour America with the AMP's *Swan Lake*. He will play opposite her in Cinderella, which in an imaginative staging by AMP's artistic director Matthew Bourne, will be set in the Blitz.

That the modern dance company has now also managed to lure Miss Wildor is dramatic proof that contemporary dance is mounting its biggest challenge

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election '97

Leaders battle over strength in Europe

Anthony Bevin
Political Editor

John Major and Tony Blair yesterday vied with each other for the strength of their defence of the British national interest in Europe.

The Conservative leader said Monday's speech by Jacques Santer, President of the European Commission, had vindicated his own warning of

European ambition for deeper integration, and helped to establish a distinct dividing line between Labour and the Tories.

But the Labour leader asked: "Who do you want to represent you? The man who has failed or the man who can succeed?"

Mr Major said in a prepared statement to his daily election press conference: "I say no to handing more powers to Brussels in a new employment chap-

ter. Mr Blair says yes. I say no to the extension of qualified majority voting. Mr Blair says yes. I say no to new powers for the European Parliament. Mr Blair says yes.

"On European control of foreign policy, I say no. Mr Blair says maybe, and means yes."

But Mr Blair said at his press conference: "The issue in this election campaign over Europe is very simple and it is this:

who will best stand up for and fight for British needs?"

John Major, the man who appointed Jacques Santer, who gave us the beef war and the fiasco over BSE and can't even keep his own political party together in the course of an election campaign?

"Or me, the person who has transformed the Labour Party into the strongest, most professional, most disciplined fighting force in British politics."

As for Mr Santer, the Labour leader said: "I disagree with a lot of what he said. Mr Santer represents the European Commission, if I am elected I will represent Britain."

But Sir Leon Brittan, the former Conservative Cabinet minister and a vice-president of the Commission, defended Mr Santer, saying that if the Euro-sceptics threw mud at the

Commission they should not be surprised if people hit back.

"In the election a large number of very harsh things have been said about the Commission," he said.

"I think the Euro-sceptics have got to have slightly thicker skins and allow themselves to be criticised because they dish it out and it is time somebody answered back."

But one of the most remarkable statements of the day came from Mr Blair in the *Sun* newspaper, in which he said: "Tomorrow is St George's Day, the day when the English celebrate the pride we have in our nation."

He said: "The Conservatives are hopelessly divided on whether Europe is the modern day dragon. Michael Howard says it is a rampaging two-headed monster, set to breathe

fire throughout our land and tear our country apart. Kenneth Clarke thinks it's like Puff the Magic Dragon - friendly, good-natured and there to help us."

The Labour leader went on: "We want a Britain strong in Europe, leading in Europe, building a Europe on Britain's terms ... St George did not slay a dragon so that England could follow the rest. He did it so that we could be strong, and ready to lead."

Anti-crime measures recycled

An undertaking to cut crime by 10 per cent during the five years of any future Conservative government, announced yesterday by Michael Howard, the Home Secretary, is a risky, possibly brave, but ultimately meaningless gesture.

In an attempt to seize the initiative on law and order - an issue which has been surprisingly low-key during the election so far - Mr Howard outlined a five-point plan to reducing crime.

However, as opposition parties and pressure groups where quick to point out, there is nothing new in any of the Home Secretary's "initiatives". All five schemes have been well publicised and one was announced as long ago as 1995.

What is new is the unprecedented decision to set a target to cut the number of offences - standing at about 5 million in England and Wales in 1996 - by 500,000.

Mr Howard is gambling on maintaining the current drop in recorded offences, which have fallen by 10 per cent during the past four years.

His optimism is not totally unfounded, although it is almost certainly based on the assumption that the less serious crimes of burglary and car theft will drop, rather than violent offences, which are rising.

By continuing to concentrate on property crime, such as stealing cars and house break-ins, which make up 92 per cent of all recorded offences, the police could bring the total down by 10 per cent. However, there is evidence that the initial success of initiatives such as the Metropolitan Police anti-burglary Operation Bumblebee is starting to fade.

There is also the question of

how the police are going to reverse the rise in violent crime, which increased by 11 per cent last year. This included sharp rises in offences that endangered life, and sex crimes. It remains to be seen whether the introduction of a tougher sentencing policy against violent and sexual offenders will deter attackers.

Recent falls in crime have seen Labour turn its attack on the Tories' record, arguing that crime has doubled while convictions have fallen since 1979.

Paul Cavadin, chairman of the Penal Affairs Consortium, is also critical of setting a 10 per cent target. He argued: "Recorded crime figures do not always reflect real trends. For example, they can fall because demoralised victims no longer see any point in reporting offences to the police."

The Home Office's British Crime Survey shows that such a fall in reporting by victims accounts for part of the recent drop in recorded crime."

The assertion by Mr Howard yesterday that his plan is "entirely new" does not stand close scrutiny. His plan includes:

- Extra funding for 5,000 more police constables in the three years to 1999. This pledge was made by John Major at the Tory conference in 1995.
- Computerised records of fingerprints and criminal files - which is already happening - and expansion of the DNA database - the police already plan to do this, but are hampered by lack of money.
- Pledges to give an extra £7m for more CCTV cameras, provide faster justice, action on juvenile crime and tough minimum prison sentences are all in the Tory manifesto.

Jason Bennetto

Falklands' future on the agenda

Colin Brown

Some suggested that the Tories might need a small foreign war to overhaul Labour's poll lead, and last night it looked as though they might have found just that.

Tory Party officials highlighted a copy of today's *Times* Defence Weekly in which it is claimed that Tony Blair had agreed to review the status of the Falklands.

"After wrapping himself in the Union Jack, it looks pretty bad," said one Tory Party official.

The newspaper reported that

Jorge Dominguez, the Argentinian Minister of Defence, had said the transfer of the Falklands to Argentina would be assured by the outcome of the election. It said Guido Di Tella, the Argentinian Foreign Minister, had met Mr Blair.

But Labour denied that Mr Blair had changed British policy or had even met Mr Di Tella. "It is utter and complete nonsense, there is not a shred of truth in the suggestion that there might be a change of policy towards the Falklands," a Labour source said.



Cross purpose: John Major is hoping to use support of the Scottish union to garner votes north of the border

Photograph: Brian Harris

Major flags up Union danger

Colin Brown
Chief Political Correspondent

John Major will today use his defence of the Union with Scotland to open up a second election front against Tony Blair's leadership.

Mr Major will pitch his campaign for the final seven days of the election at the heart of Labour's Scottish devolution plans with a speech in Aberdeen warning the Scots that their offer of a Scottish parliament with tax-raising powers would lead to the break up of the UK.

Stepping up the assault on Labour, Mr Major will link the defence of the Union to the Tories' campaign against a federal Europe.

Michael Forsyth, the Scottish Secretary, a key player in the strategy, said: "The big message is that if Labour got into power we might lose our country through the disintegration of the UK and the surrender of power to Brussels in a way that would prove irreversible."

That is a very important message which is undoubtedly beginning to worry the voters and will determine how many of the doubts which we are still finding will vote."

The Scottish Secretary is spearheading the Tory attack on the so-called Labour "tartan tax" to defend a Stirling seat with a majority of only 703. Mr

Major is convinced his campaign will capture the pro-Union votes for the Tories and fulfil a promise to increase the Tory tally of 10 from a total of 72 seats in Scotland.

Mr Major will also use the speech to attack Mr Blair's attempts to defuse fears about increased taxes by comparing

Labour's proposed Scottish parliament to a parish council. Mr Major yesterday told voters in Perth: "The Scottish Nationalists are honest about it. They are wrong but I respect their honesty. It is more than you can say for the position of the Labour Party whatever that is."

Mr Major ridiculed the ap-

parent U-turns by Mr Blair when he was heckled in the high street in Perth where the Tories lost a by-election to the SNP in 1995 following the death of Sir Nicholas Fairbairn, the former Scottish law officer.

A former Tory councillor, who has joined the SNP shouted "congratulations on turning the Tory party into an English party". Mr Major retorted the Tories would save the break-up of the UK.

That will be his central message to defend Tory seats against all the odds as he did in 1992. But the Tory strategists also believe Labour's plans are ill-thought out and Mr Blair is highly vulnerable on them.

Mr Major told voters from the platform of his campaign battle bus: "We have to raise this issue. It is an issue that rises above the normal run of politics. It is a battle that many people have not yet seen. It is a battle for the nature of the UK itself."

Mr Forsyth joined the Welsh Secretary, William Hague, in a lions' den for a photo opportunity at Blair Drummond safari park near Stirling, hoping to show their support for the British lion. Instead of cuddly cubs, they were met by fierce animals the size of large dogs with their backs raised. Mr Major could raise more today by staking his campaign on the Union flag on St George's Day.

If he fails, and the Tories lose the election, Lord Mackay, the Lord Chancellor, became the latest senior Conservative to warn that the Lords may refuse to pass Labour's devolution legislation if Mr Blair fails to allow it to be taken through its committee stage line-by-line on the floor of the Commons.

'Ermine Army' mobilised in home-rule war of words

Stephen Goodwin

The West Lothian question dogging Labour's Scottish parliament was yesterday replaced by the "Marquess of Lothian Question" as the party's home-rule plans came under attack from both Tories and Nationalists.

George Robertson, shadow Secretary of State for Scotland, posed the question in a warning to Tories not to use their in-built majority in the Lords to thwart devolution.

Legislation promised by a party in its manifesto is not by convention opposed by the Lords. But in an interview in yesterday's *Scotsman*, Lord Mackay of Clashfern, the Lord Chancellor, suggested the fundamental nature of Labour's plans, beginning with a Bill for a referendum this autumn, meant peers might not be bound by the normal rules.

He indicated that if the such an important constitutional measure was considered by an upstairs committee, as Labour intends, rather than one of the whole House, then peers would be justified in examining it "line by line".

Such detailed scrutiny could well delay a referendum beyond the autumn.

Mr Robertson said that having lost the democratic argument, the Tory party was preparing to use its "Ermine Army" to subvert the democratic process. Labour, however, would retaliate with "the power of the people" - a reminder of the pledge to abolish the voting rights of hereditary peers, including the Conservative Marquess of Lothian.

Mr Robertson provoked new "parish council" charges from the SNP by emphasising that the Edinburgh parliament would not be able to extend its powers or turn itself into an independent state.

THE HURRIED VOTER'S GUIDE

THE CAMPAIGN

Labour moved to put business back at the top of its agenda, with a promise to help entrepreneurs and to send "business ambassadors" for Britain around the globe. High-profile business-people including Anita Roddick were shown backing Labour on video at the party's morning news conference, and the party claimed Britain had fallen to number 21 in the world prosperity league.

The Conservatives concentrated on law and order, setting out a five-year plan to cut crime by 10 per cent. Michael Howard, the Home Secretary, launched a swinging attack on Labour for being "soft on crime", but also said the Tories would attack the causes of crime - half of Labour's strategy on the subject.

The Liberal Democrats made a pitch for the youth vote with a seven-point plan launched by 34-year-old Matthew Taylor, the youngest MP in the last session of Parliament. It was later revealed that Mr Taylor was likely to be underdog in the age stakes at the next election by an incoming Labour member. Paddy Ashdown went to the Isle of Wight, where he found himself in a spat with his candidate, Morris Barton, who had been campaigning for partial independence for the island.

"Everybody knows that's not the Liberal Democrat policy," Mr Ashdown said.

KEY ARGUMENTS

Tony Blair made a speech claiming that he was simultaneously a "modern man" with a fresh set of 21st century ideas and the baton-carrier for Labour leaders down the ages including Blair, Hardie, Clement Attlee and Harold Wilson.

Michael Heseltine, the Deputy Prime Minister, launched an attack on Labour, the unions and Europe, saying Blair's European policy was "the pay-off to the unions for their silence before the election so that they get their power back after the election."

A Conservative election broadcast showed a party in the mood for parables. Labour, it said, was "a tree without roots" which, "at the first blow from the trade unions, would cave in."

Paddy Ashdown joined the party leaders' rush to be the most patriotic. "Is it patriotism to stand by and watch as our society becomes more and more divided? As young people are forced to sleep rough on our streets? As people are left behind in poverty, without hope?"

"A true patriot would be ashamed of the Government's record over the last five years ... How dare they wrap up such failure in the Union Jack," he said.

GOOD DAY

Long live the Queen - so says SNP leader Alex Salmond, who pointed out that the party supported the right of Elizabeth I, Queen of the Scots, to be head of state when she resided in Scotland. When absent, her role would be filled by the speaker of the national Scottish parliament. But more ominously for HM, he added the Queen should rule "until such time as the people of Scotland indicate otherwise."

ONE TO REMEMBER

Scottish devolution movements can go too far even for the SNP. An Orkney Islander phoned the party leader Alex Salmond on the BBC's Election Call to ask whether he thought the islands should be independent of an independent Scotland. Mr Salmond did not like the idea, nor the suggestion that the Orkneys might even wish to affiliate to Norway. He said "the rights we claim for Scotland are those of a nation, and national self-determination".

BAD DAY

After years of fighting Conservative social policy, Frank Field, Labour MP for Birkenhead and chair of the Commons Social Services Committee, found himself quoted on the election leaflet of Peter Lilley, the Secretary of State for Social Security. The leaflet quotes Mr Field as saying of Mr Lilley: "He has a very clear view of changing ... the welfare state, and he is doing it very skillfully."

HOGWASH

A speech from Tony Blair: "I am a modern man, I am someone of my generation. I am someone who is facing up to these issues in a modern way." Blair said people wanted "a party that can take this country forward and make sense of the modern world, rather than attempting to shy away from it and simply retreat backwards". He explained Labour had been liberated from "out-dated prescriptions, to allow the values to take root again in the modern world."

THE OTHER PARTIES

Plaid Cymru said yesterday that the effects of the squabbling over Europe could be "devastating". Lord Dafydd Elis-Thomas, the former leader of the party, said that the level of inward investment and European funding which is attracted could not be sustained, let alone increased.

Meanwhile the Green Party's principal speaker, David Taylor, is to address a meeting of Somerset County Council, to criticise the council's decision to switch money from public transport provision to a project to build a road to a quarry which is supplying gravel ... for another road.

MEDIA STAR

The ProLife Alliance hit the headlines yesterday when broadcasters announced that their party election broadcast, which was due to be shown tomorrow, has to be altered after it was deemed to breach taste and decency guidelines. It features shots of body parts from foetuses aborted at clinics in the United States. Bruno Quintavalle, who runs the ProLife Alliance, said last night that his party was consulting lawyers. Channel 4 also announced it was considering whether to show the PEB of the British National Party.

Ashdown pours scorn on opponents' patriot games

Barrie Clement

For the first time in the election campaign, Paddy Ashdown last night staked his claim to patriotism after encountering a rough ride on the streets of Portsmouth at the hands of the nationalist Referendum Party.

Involving his own career as a soldier and diplomat, Mr Ashdown denounced the "phony patriotism" of the Conservatives and the "designer patriotism" of Labour.

His patriotism, however, was called into question earlier by banner-waving supporters of the Referendum Party who were involved in minor scuffles with Liberal Democrat activists.

As Mr Ashdown went on a "walkabout" in Portsmouth shopping precinct, he was surrounded by representatives of the Referendum Party who attempted to hijack the proceedings.

Eventually the Liberal Democrat leader decided that his ploy of ignoring his noisy detractors had not worked. He told them: "You are entitled to your view, but you won't win your votes by being rude."

He said true patriotism meant restoring the traditional values of "decency, tolerance and fair play" and acting with

self-confidence abroad. The Tory drift to the right, towards "mean-minded nastiness" had

left one-nation Conservatives disillusioned, depressed and in search of a new home. He urged them to emulate Emma Nicholson and Peter Thurnham, former Tory MPs who

joined the Liberal Democrats. "Nothing is more distasteful about cornered Conservatives than the way they pretend they are the only people who can stand up for Britain," he said.

And as for the bulldog and Union flags now used by the Labour Party, patriotism was more than "symbols": it came from the soul.

THE CANDIDATE

by Aanonymous

So - tonight was to be another night of passion, thought the Candidate; his third of the campaign. And to be honest, he wasn't sure how much he was looking forward to it - there seemed to him to be as much danger involved as excitement. Not to mention the ever-present risk of looking ridiculous.

The whole idea had arisen from one of those meetings involving Friend Bobby and the Brothers. Brother One - the ad man - had been doing some "focus-grouping" and had brought the results to the attention of his younger sibling - Brother Two, who in turn had consulted Bobby. And this was how Bobby had explained it all.

"The voters," he said, speaking with that intimacy which most people reserve for descriptions of their spouses or children, "have got the responsible bit. No one questions that we're as tight and prudent as the sphincter on an eel. They believe all that. They have absorbed Mr Brown's message, have assessed his personality, and decided that his dying granny would have put up a bloody good case on 100 sheets of A4 before being allowed to borrow an aspirin."

"But, there is some evidence that we're losing it with sections of the core vote and even - strangely one might think - with some of those guilt-ridden professionals who voted Tory last time, and who are now tempted to atone for their sins by paying 45p a week extra for education, health, unemployment and anything else that the Marine fancies allocating it to this week."

"Ned ...", he nodded in the direction of Brother One, "thinks that we need to do something to show that we're still a party of conviction, they feel to need we really care. There is ground to be made up in the areas of commitment and passion."

This, the Candidate had known once, meant him. At the very beginning of the campaign it had been decided that he was both the key asset and biggest potential liability for his party. He had to be leaderly, he had to suggest wisdom, exude vision and to reassure. And now he had to be passionate, a quality that did not

come easily to him. But why not? Looks, partly. He will always find it hard to smile, like the dark, waxy-looking Mr Brown. The Candidate was more (as his wife had once told him) of an English Rose type - attractive, but not dripping with sex appeal.

Another problem was that he was saddled with the need to make a whole lot of very carefully prepared speeches: speeches full of lists enumerating the seven pillars, the 10 commitments, the five pledges. He had tried to put inflections and mild arm-waving into his reading of the written texts, but within a paragraph or two he would feel it going flat again. In television reports he came over as immensely competent, but lacking in colour.

Finally, they'd sussed it. The Candidate needed to go off text altogether. He had to leave the claustrophobic comfort of the podium and his notes, and become a free-range leader, prowling the stage in *sensu* *leave*. Left alone with his emotions and his notes he could communicate directly from his heart to the hearts of his listeners. And he would wear shirtsleeves.

There were still problems, however. Expectations had been formed by Hollywood's notions of passion: all those tears, hugs, wails and pummelled walls. What should he do with his body? With his arms? His legs? And what was he actually going to say? It was all very well speaking from the heart, but when you consulted your heart on a stuffy evening in Stevenage, what would you find there, other than an earnest desire to go home?

In Edinburgh, it had nearly not worked. He had stepped forward from the lectern with the words "I'll tell you what I believe," and the bastards in charge of the lights had made such an obvious change, that the whole thing had been in danger of looking totally rigged. He had been saved by the failure of the sound system, forcing him to reach the nether regions of the large hall with his boy's voice. It had been a triumph.

At the end, Mrs Candidate had grabbed him and kissed him. "You know," she said, "there was one moment when you put a hand on your hip and pointed to the balcony - and you looked just like John Travolta in *Saturday Night Fever*!"

No one questions that we're as tight as the sphincter on an eel



On the streets: Martin McGuinness of Sinn Féin doing the rounds in Mid-Ulster

Photograph: John Voos

Voters dream of day when hope and history rhyme

Sinn Féin presents itself as party of peace. David McKittrick reports

Martin McGuinness of Sinn Féin canvasses in the shadow of Bellaghy bawn, a fortified farmhouse dating back three centuries. The bawn is a metaphor of possession and dispossession: the election much the same story, a modern enactment of ancient quarrels.

This is pleasant countryside with an unpleasant history. The bawn was built on a jutting rise to house Protestants, sent from England to subdue this rebellious land for English monarchs.

The records show that John Rowley and Baptist Jones were given 3,200 acres of south Londonderry countryside to hold for England during the plantation. No one here has forgotten that it was Catholic land.

Today's political equivalent is the seat of Mid-Ulster, which has a nationalist majority but which since 1983 has been held by the Rev William McCrea. Mr McCrea, a follower of the Rev Ian Paisley, is on the furthest shores of political loyalism: he is the extremist's extremist.

His bawn is now under assault from Mr McGuinness of Sinn Féin and from the SDLP's Denis Haughey, one of John Hume's personal aides. The contest gives an insight into the state of opinion within northern nationalism, and thus the prospects for a new peace process.

Seamus Heaney, a local man, wrote of a time when hope and history might rhyme. In Bellaghy, there is both much hope and if anything a surfeit of history, and in this election they are

inextricably entwined.

Mr McGuinness's doorstep patter reflects what are clearly the twin aspirations of nationalist voters, a new peace process and a McCrea defeat. "This is a very important election," he says to a balding man who is still blinking from the surprise of opening his door to the Sinn Féin leader.

"We're trying to use this election to do two things. First, to rebuild the peace process - we see it as a new opportunity for a peace settlement with a new British

SDLP, he says. A successful vote for Sinn Féin would make peace less likely, he argues. "I think the IRA would conclude that they can win votes without delivering peace."

Mr McCrea, meanwhile, concentrates on the defence of his parliamentary bawn. Quite a few on the Unionist side have no great love for him, but at election times they turn out in force to do their constitutional, political and tribal duty. This time his seat is in its

has since been jailed for eight years for threatening to kill a woman.

The balding man told me later: "McCrea went on a stage with Billy Wright. That's turned everybody against him." And yet many of those expressing abhorrence about Mr Wright's alleged associations with violence are gearing up to vote for Mr McGuinness, whose reputation is not that of a pacifist.

This is partly because a lot of them are republicans who support or tolerate the IRA, but also because they seem to believe Sinn Féin when it says it wants peace. Something important has changed here, as can be seen both from the Sinn Féin message, and the message they are getting back on the doorstep - a deep desire for peace.

Mr McGuinness himself says: "Everybody wants peace and everybody wants to see another ceasefire and everybody wants to see real negotiation."

Thus the McGuinness doorstep presentation is designed to reflect nationalist voters' concerns: the topping of Mr McCrea and a new ceasefire.

Mr McCrea may or may not survive. But the most important thing is that Sinn Féin candidates are receiving the message that the grassroots are hoping and indeed expecting another IRA cessation after the election. This in itself is enough to keep alive the hope that peace remains a possibility, and that hope and history may yet come to rhyme.

The contest gives an insight into the opinion of northern nationalism

government. And it's also the best opportunity nationalists will ever have to get rid of Willie McCrea as MP. The message is a concise blend of the aspirational and the tribal.

Mr Haughey, meanwhile, directs his fire against both Mr McCrea and Mr McGuinness. A lot of those who voted for Sinn Féin in last year's forum election, he argues, did so "as a very sincere honourable well-intentioned gesture to try to encourage the IRA to make the peace". But now they feel let down and will come back to the

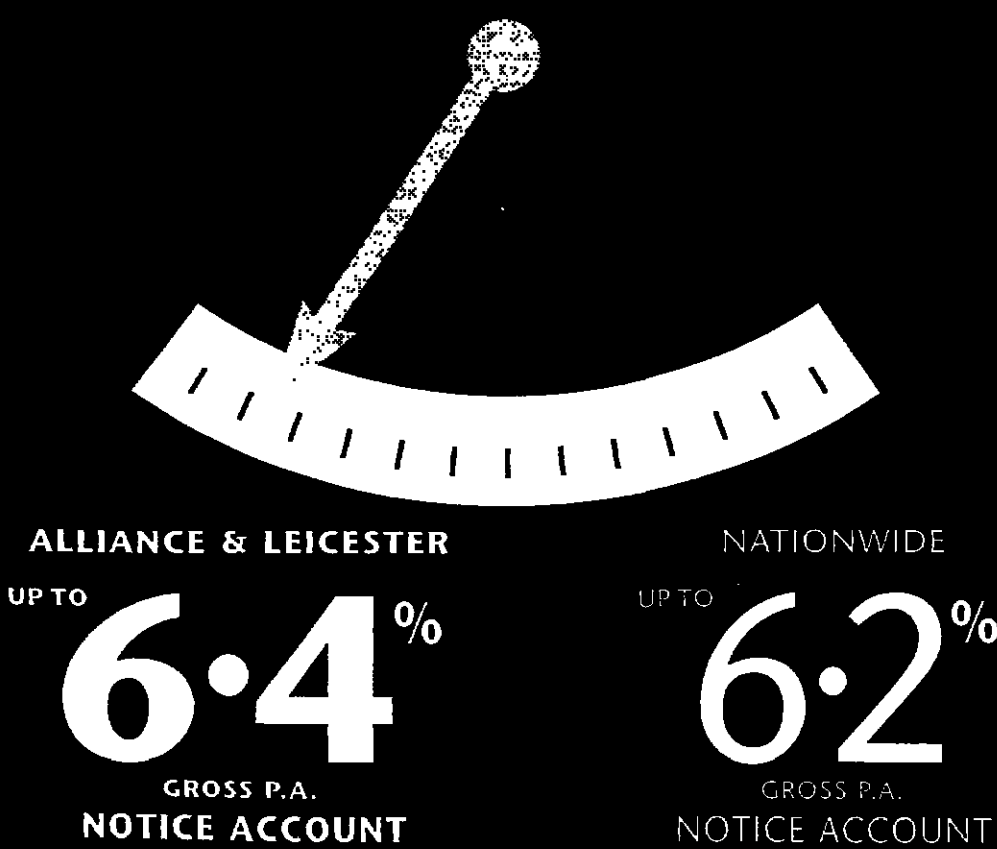
greatest peril, for three reasons: boundary changes have been unhelpful; he faces in Mr McGuinness one of republicanism's best-known figures; and his support for a loyalist paramilitary looks like galvanising nationalists into a determined attempt to unseat him.

Last September, he appeared on the platform at a rally in support of Billy Wright, a hardline paramilitary who has openly associated himself with loyalist violence. Mr Wright is not now in a position to return the favour by canvassing for the MP, for he

QUOTES OF THE DAY



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Parties scramble to claim the mantle of youth

Labour's roll-call of twentysomething candidates put paid to Lib-Dems theme of the day

Fran Abrams
Political Correspondent

Liberal Democrat claims to be the party of youth fell flat yesterday when it emerged that the title of "youngest MP" was about to fall to Labour.

The revelation sparked desperate attempts to regain the trophy by the Liberal Democrats, whose theme of the day was "Give Youth A Chance".

Although the Liberal Democrats have only one under-30 in a seat they can seriously expect to win, Labour has three. The Conservatives' youngest serious hopeful is 30.

While it is still not clear who will be the youngest MP, Labour will certainly carry off the trophy. Yvette Cooper, a former *Independent* journalist, is standing for the party at the age of 25 in the safe seat of Pontefract and Castleford, while Claire Ward, 24, might well win Watford.

The Liberal Democrats' youngest serious contender is Stephen Gallagher, 29, who takes over from the retiring Sir Russell Johnston in Inverness East, Nairn and Lochaber.

However, in an attempt to prove they were still the party of youth, Liberal Democrat spin doctors last night sent *The Independent* a list of all the seats where they had under-30s fighting in second place. These included Huntingdon, where the Prime Minister has a 22,000 majority.

The Conservatives do not have any policy on whether or not putting young MPs into Parliament is a good thing, a spokeswoman for the party said slightly sniffily. She suggested a handful of 33- and 34-year-olds along with one 40-year-old as the Tory representatives from the younger end of the market. Graham Brady, 30, will take over the safe seat of Altrincham and Sale from Sir Fergus Montgomery.

"It really depends what you mean by 'winable', the spokeswoman said, wondering whether to include the Stafford candidate David Cameron, born in 1966. "It's a 6,000 majority."

Labour's third young contender is Lorna Fitzsimmons, 29, who is fighting the highly marginal Rochdale for the party.

Yesterday Ms Ward said she was very hopeful of winning the seat, which would give Labour a majority of 51 if it fell to the party on a uniform swing. Being the youngest MP would not be too hard a cross to bear.

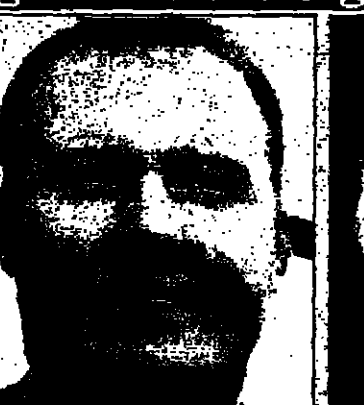
Four hopeful twentysomethings who stand a good chance of winning a Westminster seat



Claire Ward, 24, Labour candidate for Watford.



Yvette Cooper, 25, Labour candidate for Pontefract and Castleford.



Stephen Gallagher, 29, Liberal Democrat candidate for Inverness East, Nairn and Lochaber.



Graham Brady, 30, Tory candidate for Altrincham and Sale West.

Already seen in the *Independent* as well as standing for Parliament, Ward is a former *Independent* journalist. She worked as a radio producer in the north, and as a TV producer in the south. She was a member of the Conservative Party and the College of Law in London.

Yvette Cooper, 25, Labour candidate for Pontefract and Castleford. A former *Independent* journalist, she worked for both John Smith, the former Labour leader, and Gordon Brown, the shadow Chancellor. Born in Inverness, she took a first in PPE from Balliol, Oxford, and spent a year at Harvard as well as working on Bill Clinton's election campaign in 1992.

Stephen Gallagher, 29, Liberal Democrat candidate for Inverness East, Nairn and Lochaber. He is a former *Independent* journalist and a member of the Conservative Party. He worked for the BBC and the *Independent* before joining the Liberal Democrats.

Graham Brady, 30, Tory candidate for Altrincham and Sale West. He is a former *Independent* journalist and a member of the Conservative Party. He worked for the BBC and the *Independent* before joining the Conservatives.

The bright sparks who entered the Commons at a tender age



Bernadette Devlin, Independent Unionist MP for Mid-Ulster.



Stephen Dorrell, Secretary of State for Health.



Charles Kennedy, Liberal Democrat MP for Ross, Cromarty and Skye.



Matthew Taylor, Liberal Democrat MP for Truro.

Bernadette Devlin, Independent Unionist MP for Mid-Ulster. Elected at 21, Bernadette Devlin (now McAliskey) remains the youngest ever woman MP. The most famous incident in her political career was her arrest in the Chamber of the House of Commons in 1968 for protesting against the Bloody Sunday shootings.

Stephen Dorrell, Secretary of State for Health. He became an MP in 1979 at the age of 22, when he was elected Conservative MP for Loughborough. He was a member of the House of Commons from 1979 to 1992, and then became a member of the House of Lords.

Charles Kennedy, Liberal Democrat MP for Ross, Cromarty and Skye. Was youngest MP 1983-87 after being elected to his seat for the SDP aged 24. Son of a crofter, he was president of the Glasgow University Union, 1980-81, before becoming a journalist with BBC Highland in 1982. Has been president of the Liberal Democrats and spoke for them on health, and Europe.

Matthew Taylor, Liberal Democrat MP for Truro. Elected as a Liberal MP in 1987, at 24, he has been the youngest member for the past 10 years and is his party's spokesman on local government. He went to school in Truro and London and won a scholarship to Lady Margaret Hall, Oxford, where he was president of the university student union.



Lorna Fitzsimmons, 29, Labour candidate for Rochdale. A former president of the National Union of Students, Ms Fitzsimmons now works as a lobbyist. She has already been the Institute of Public Relations' "Young Communicator of the Year" and was nominated for *Cosmopolitan's* "Woman of the Year" in 1993. She finds time for an leisure pursuits including hill walking and "playing the horn".

Abortion film axed on decency grounds

Jojo Moyes

The BBC and other broadcasters have refused to screen a party election broadcast by the anti-abortion Pro-Life Alliance which features an aborted foetus, following concerns that it could breach Independent Television Commission guidelines on taste and decency.

The PLA, which is fielding 56 candidates in the election, said yesterday that it had been contacted by both the BBC and Channel 4 about the broadcast, due to be screened tomorrow.

The film was intended to include clips from a controversial American video, *Hard Truth*, which shows footage of body parts from foetuses aborted at clinics in the United States.

"After viewing with other broadcasters and careful consideration, we have decided that a sequence in the proposed

party election broadcast by the Pro-Life Alliance would be offensive under BBC guidelines and cannot be shown in the present form," the BBC said in a statement. It added that the PLA's radio broadcast would go ahead as planned today.

The director of the PLA, Bruno Quintavalle, said the organisation was consulting lawyers about the possibility of a judicial review.

He said they had been told by Channel 4 that the broadcast could only be screened after midnight and by the BBC that it could not be shown at any time or under any circumstances.

"If this film is so horrible that we are not allowed to watch it, why on earth is this fabrication going on in this country 500 times in every single day?" he said. It is planning to appeal, with the aid of the human rights organisation Liberty. Liberty's

director, John Wadham, said yesterday that although the PLA was its "political enemy" it was important to ensure that everyone had the right to express their view.

"We are acting as their lawyers on a possible challenge to the decision to ban their broadcast. Liberty has for many years been an organisation which supports women's right to choose and we remain committed to women's right to choose," Mr Wadham said.

The rules governing party election broadcasts state that if the organisation has correctly nominated 30 parliamentary candidates by 16 April, it should get a five-minute broadcast. But broadcasters are also bound by rules which say programmes should not include anything "which offends against good taste or decency or is likely to be offensive to public feeling".

Channel 4 also confirmed yesterday that it had expressed reservations about the suitability of the planned broadcast submitted by the far-right British National Party. A spokesman for the BNP said that the election broadcast was planned to go ahead on Friday.

The Conservatives' latest broadcast, shown last night, seeks to play on voters' fears that new Labour has cut itself off from its roots and can be blown in any direction, writes Fran Abrams.

Using the image of a pine tree being cut down and then propped up again alongside a more stately Conservative conifer, the broadcast used a series of newspaper headlines to show how Labour's policy had changed over the past few years. The Tory tree was a Wellingtonia, said by some sources to be similar to a Giant Redwood.

Luton's flowers suffer from crop of reds in the bed

Luton's municipal gardeners will remember the day Tony Blair came to town long after the memory has faded in the minds of the people who booed and cheered him yesterday.

Crushed bulbs and withered stems were his legacy as those for him and those against were marshalled, shouting at each other from the raised brick flower beds that pass for street chic in Bedfordshire.

"Go on home you fat slag," was but one of the comments launched from the red flower bed as the blue corner, peopled by a band of hardy Tory women, trooped heavily through the tulips shouting: "Tory not Tony!"

Into the pedestrianised valley between them strode Mr Blair, smiling resolutely, daggers to the right of him, chanting to

Steve Boggan on the horticultural havoc wreaked by Tony Blair's visit

the left. He had just arrived on the Labour battlebus, climbed on to his red-carpeted podium and greeted Luton's shopping masses outside their town hall.

He issued the usual promises: more nurses, fewer managers; smaller class sizes; something for the elderly; something for the young; and then launched himself into the frenzied mass with a gusto that can come only from a determination to govern ones country.

The Tory corner was filled with no more than five or six women holding placards, but they made enough noise to disrupt the event and demolish the flowers. "He's just a puppet of the

unions," said Barbara Jones, 31. "I don't want him to ruin the economy and I want to keep my job and be able to pay my mortgage."

"This is spitting, anyway," she added, surveying the crowd of 200 or so. "There were 10 times this many when John Major came two weeks ago."

As Mr Blair and his wife, Cherie, shook scores of hands, making almost as many friends, Ian Pringle, 31, a council worker, shook his head. "There may have been more people," he said. "But they were booing and jeering. It wasn't exactly a warm reception."

constituencies, north and south, which are well within Labour's reach. In the north, Kelvin Hopkins needs to claw back a majority of 5,949 to topple Tory David Senior. In the south, Margaret Moran needs to overturn a majority of just 583 to replace Sir Graham Bright, another Conservative. And the feeling in the town centre yesterday was that they could do it.

"I'd prefer it if they didn't win," said Malcolm Garlick, 37, a flower seller. "They're moving in the right direction but they could do with another five years of learning about business. Having said all that, I think they will take both Luton seats."

The words would have warmed the cockles of Mr Blair's heart and, if he had heard them, perhaps he would have planted a few red roses in his wake.

BRITAIN SWINGS BACK TO THE RIGHT



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Liberty attacks marked ballots

John Rentoul

The practice of numbering ballot papers is a threat to secret voting and should be scrapped, according to Liberty, the civil liberties campaign group.

As in previous general elections, all votes cast on Thursday next week will be traceable – in theory – by matching serial numbers on the ballot form with the electoral roll numbers recorded by polling-station clerks on counterfoils.

This is to allow votes to be traced in cases of "personation", when someone votes claiming to be someone they are not. If personation is proved, the bogus vote can be retrieved and the genuine voter allowed to cast a vote instead.

But Liberty claims the procedure is a "serious threat to ballot secrecy", because state agencies could abuse vote tracing to find out who voted for parties of which they disapproved. "We have learned much in recent years about some of the more dubious activities of MIS," said a Liberty report on vote tracing.

"We now learn from the debates on the Police Bill that the police have also for decades been engaged in covert surveillance and telephone bugging without the knowledge or control of the responsible ministers," the report added.

It continued: "Can we really believe that these agencies would never attempt to find out who voted for a candidate whose views they considered subversive or dangerous, when they could do so quickly and easily, in secret, with no public controversy?"

But Liberty has clashed with the Electoral Reform Society, with which it carried out a joint inquiry into ballot secrecy, published yesterday.

The ERS concluded that vote-tracing was needed to "en-

sure the probity of the system" by enabling abuse to be identified and corrected.

But Liberty argues that vote-tracing "does not help in the detection of electoral fraud". It simply allows the result to be corrected, if personation is proved, according to its dissenting report. This would only matter if the number of fraudulent votes were greater than the winning candidate's majority.

Liberty calls for vote tracing to be abolished and admits that it would not be possible to correct an election result if fraud were proven in a close contest. "It might become necessary to re-run a constituency election in a very few cases – one a century, perhaps – when the winner's majority is smaller than the number of personated votes. That is a small price to pay for a truly secret ballot," says the Liberty report.

Eric Syddique, director of the ERS, disagrees. "I think they are naïve. The fact that the vote-tracing rules are there is a deterrent. Remove them, and over a period of time people would work out how to carry out fraud and get away with it. And if an election is a snapshot at a particular time, a re-run election may produce a very different result."

But Liberty claims that Home Office officials have admitted that the vote-tracing provisions are no longer needed, and that they cause public disquiet. It argues that voters should still be checked off the electoral register when they vote, to prevent personation, but that nothing should be written on the counterfoils of ballot forms.

Vote tracing has been controversial since it was introduced along with the secret ballot – as distinct from public voting which preceded it – in the Ballot Act of 1872.



Morning tea: Michael Howard (left) and John Humphrys relaxing yesterday before the Home Secretary's interview on Radio 4's Today programme

Photograph: Andrew Buurman

Why the politicians worry about 'Today'

Paul McCann goes into the studio and behind the scenes to find out why an early-morning radio programme sets the news agenda for the day

Nine minutes past eight yesterday morning and in the Today programme studio Gordon Brown is worried. And he's not even there.

His gravelly Scots voice is disembodied and emerging from a speaker connected by landline with the BBC's Westminster offices in Millbank. Most senior politicians prefer a face-to-face interview, with the exception of Michael Heseltine, the Deputy Prime Minister, who uses a radio car because he claims not to get out of bed before 8am.

"We've spent a lot of time on this economic research," says

the wall-mounted speaker to the Today editor, Jon Barton. "I'd hate to see it go unreported." The report he is talking about is an OECD survey that Labour claims shows Tory Britain tumbling down the economic performance league.

Today knows the shadow Chancellor is worried. They had Charlie Whelan, his media minder, calling up the day before trying to make sure that the

Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD) is the lead item in Mr Brown's interview – at 10 minutes past eight with the co-presenter John Humphrys.

As it turns out he was right to be worried – in the handover meeting between Today's day and night teams the evening before, it had already been decided that Mr Brown is on to speak about Europe in the aftermath of Jacques Santer's intervention in the election.

The entire interview is composed of Mr Humphrys trying to get Mr Brown to express a Labour view on the single currency. The OECD doesn't get a mention until a later item.

It is a standard day of spin doctoring and political pressure for the nation's flagship morning news programme.

"I thought, when I joined, it would be endless harassment by Mandelson and Lewington,"

said Mr Barton, about the respective Labour and Tory party chief spin doctors. "But while we've had strong complaints about the parties it is not minute-by-minute spinning."

Mr Barton believes that the live and flexible nature of Today makes it less amenable to the spin doctor's art than television news, which deals in pre-recorded "packages" of footage.

He said: "The programme is long and can do several interviews on a subject. That way several points of view can be conveyed in one programme and they stay off our back."

He thinks the spin doctors feel there is more to be gained by trying to influence the choice of soundbite or footage used by lunchtime news programmes because those clips can be run throughout the rest of the day, on various television news shows, creating as they go the agenda of that day.

James Naughtie, one of the Today presenters, agreed: "There is an initial feeling to an interview that means it can't be spun. Spin doctoring has become an obsession that's completely out of proportion. Most of it is by people who want to write lots of self-aggrandising books after the election."

But while Today is dismissive of politicians' attempts to manipulate its agenda, yesterday's other big political interview smelted at the very least of opportunism.

Michael Howard, the Home Secretary, was booked to come on the programme to discuss a "major crime initiative". But Mr Howard's crime proposal, when eventually revealed to a sleepy nation at nine minutes past seven, was patently not much of a story. Mr Major would propose a target 10 per cent cut in crime to be achieved by a lot of things that had already been

announced. "You're not introducing anything new today then," was Mr Humphrys' sceptical response to the "major crime initiative".

What is less clear is who exactly is the opportunist. The crime initiative was largely a fig-leaf for Mr Howard, a right-wing Tory leadership contender, to get on Today and bash Mr Santer. But Today was happy to have Mr Howard talking about Europe because he had disagreed with Kenneth Clarke, the Chancellor, at the weekend on the Amsterdam summit's implications for British sovereignty.

Two small interviews an hour apart, probably lost in the election's frenzy of nothingness, but they nicely illustrate why Mr Howard is such a feared political operator, and that Millbank's spin patrol yet have something to learn.

Michael Howard was giving Today a solid Europe-party-split story. Gordon Brown, in the words of John Humphrys, "wanted to come on and bash the Tories with a load of doggy statistics".

US writers offer no respite

Kim Sengupta

Spin doctors and soundbites, razmatazz and auto cues, personalities overshadowing policies, and two main parties with similar manifestos – American journalists feel at home covering this election.

The presidential-style campaign being waged by John Major and Tony Blair has also, perhaps, made the contest more accessible to parts of the US media. And this has led to some acerbic dissections of the characters of the two men.

Tony Blair has suffered by far the more in this, and surprisingly from a writer who may have been expected to be in sympathy with the leader of New Labour.

Joe Klein, the "Anonymous" author of the now-famous *Primary Colours*, and representing *The New Yorker*, was the sole foreign correspondent granted access to the Blair battlebus in its journey up and down Britain.

The magazine, which regards itself as the voice of sophisticated East-Coast liberalism, is edited by Tina Brown who, it has been said, covers the job of arts min-

ister in a Blair government. Her journalist and publisher husband, Harold Evans, has organised Labour fund-raising bashes in New York. But this did not prevent Mr Klein from penning some trenchant criticism: "If Bill Clinton is the ultimate salesman ... Blair at times seems the ultimate sales clerk anxiously peddling toaster ovens ..."

If Mr Blair is handicapped by his perceived similarities to Clinton, John Major suffers badly in comparison with the one modern British politician the Americans know well, Lady

Thatcher. Writing in *Newsweek*, Stryker McGuire stated that on Europe "Major has been unable to keep a couple of hundred would-be MPs in line. This raises questions about his leadership – and unfavourable comparisons with his predecessor Margaret Thatcher's toughness ..."

Time magazine noted Labour's long march away from socialism under Mr Blair. It said: "A party once identified with red flags, brown suits, and Marxist shop stewards had already eaten its share of humble pie, if not spinach."

HOW I WILL VOTE: SARA PARKIN

Support goes to greenest candidate

Sara Parkin was a spokesperson for the Green Party until 1992. In 1996 she helped to found the Real World coalition, an alliance of 32 pressure groups including Oxfam and Friends of the Earth which aims to promote issues of environment and equality.

How will you vote?
I don't yet know.

Do you have any preferences at all at the moment?
Well, as a member of the Real World organisation, I have asked each of the candidates in my constituency to respond to each of the Real World's 12 "action points". When they respond, I will make my judgement on how to vote.

You don't see an election as a battle between Major and Blair?

No, I want to use what limited power I have in the British electoral system to get the greenest bottoms on parliamentary seats as I can. Real World is also going to do an analysis of the

party manifestos according to those points.

Do you think that the parties have a long way to go with these issues at the moment?
Oh, absolutely. This has to move centre stage. I have been involved in environmental campaigning for 30 years now, and all the evidence is that the rate of environmental degradation is accelerating.



Our sense of urgency is enhanced, not diminished.

You were involved in the Green Party, until you stepped down as Chair. Do you ever regret that decision?
No, I don't. I regret that it was necessary, but I don't regret doing it. My decision on how I will vote will be for an electable candidate, and I think that's very important.

My reason for withdrawing from the Green Party was that it did not want to think strategically about how it could operate within the British electoral system. It's the ideas we want to get into the public domain, the ideas we want to get into power.

Are you optimistic that what you would term a Green government will come about before it's too late?
Well, we've got no judgement about what is and what isn't too late. I think we've got to do something pretty swiftly, we've got to reduce our impact on the environment by about 50 per

cent within the next 30 to 40 years. I think the evidence will be delivered increasingly to governments from the environment and the impact of the degrading environment on people and on the economy which are already increasingly visible – and so governments will go green. What sort of government that is, I don't know.

In Germany, you've got the German Greens now well positioned to perhaps be in a coalition government with the Social Democrats after the next election. In some cases it will be green parties providing the vetoes, in other cases it will be either green parties or green movements being the catalyst, but one way or the other, government is going to go green. It's not a question of whether they do or not, it's when and how.

I get asked by people "who shall I vote for?" I shall be encouraging everybody that does to get the Real World list and ask the candidates. These are the issues that really matter.

Interview by Ben Summers

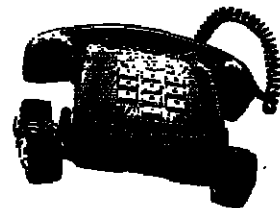
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مكتبة من الأناضول

Howarth basks in community values



Parent power: Alan Howarth canvassing outside St Julian's school in the Newport East constituency yesterday

Photograph: Rob Stratton

Tony Heath

Memories in Wales are long. The giant Llanwrthwl steel works, one of Europe's most efficient, is at the heart of the Newport East constituency. Alan Howarth was sitting on the Tory benches at the time of the 1984 miners' dispute and Arthur Scargill was running the strike. How times change. Mr Howarth who crossed the floor to join Labour in 1995 is bearing Tony Blair's standard in this safe Labour seat. And Mr Scargill, founder of the Socialist Labour Party and scourge of New Labour, has entered the fray. Mr Howarth was selected with some ease - he triumphed on the first ballot - by party members barely a month ago after the veteran Roy Hughes stood down after 31 years as MP. Labour in Newport is neither old Labour nor new Labour, just consistent Labour firmly attached to community values. Out canvassing with a posse of supporters in the Beechwood area Mr Howarth was at ease. "I hope you'll support me on polling day," he said to Bev-

Newport East: Scargill presence threatens to reopen old wounds

erley Price, who was waiting to collect her six-year-old twin daughters from St Julian's infant school. At another school, Alway primary, parents have clubbed together to pay the salary of Paula Hoddinott a teacher threatened with redundancy. "The Government cuts, teachers face the sack, but the community rallies round," Mr Howarth commented. A good listener, he exhibits a steady determination to win the electors' trust. He knows that there is some scepticism over his conversion. At the time he switched sides there were cries of *tuncoat*, but remarkably few came from Labour in Newport. In fact, Paul Flynn, who is seeking re-election in Newport West, quickly went public with a press release praising Mr Howarth's courage. Denis Coughlin, now retired, recalls the steelmen's involvement in the miners' strike of 1984. The plant was kept in op-

eration by fleets of lorries ferrying in coal. "We did as much as we could to help. Money and so on. We even gave pickets our 'pinkies', meal chits printed on pink paper, so that they could get extra food," he remembers. "Now Scargill is just out to make trouble." For the president of the National Union of Mineworkers, already seething over the ditching of Clause Four, Mr Howarth's conversion was the last straw. "In Newport there's a choice between two Tories - the official Tory and the Labour Tory - and a genuine socialist," Mr Scargill maintains. Other memories surfaced at Usk View old people's home where 40 senior citizens were at tea. Mr Howarth listened carefully to Nellie Dale, a sprightly 90-year-old. Her childhood was a time of hope, with collieries hard at work a few miles outside the town and the docks bustling with trade. A tract on

the wall reads: "When I am an old woman I shall wear purple with a red hat." Later, as he prepared for yet another television interview, Mr Howarth remarked: "The Tories have lost touch with the decent instincts of people. Places like Usk View, where people needing help are really helped, tell another story. The community here is still attached to traditional values but it is also forward thinking." When Labour chose its new man the Tory candidate, David Evans, claimed the seat would become marginal. The cliché has it that a week is a long time in politics, but evidence on the ground suggests the prediction is flawed. With the Liberal Democrat, Alistair Cameron, Plaid Cymru's Christopher Holland, Garth Davies of the Referendum Party and Mr Scargill all on the ballot the final figures will be revealing. But with the inheritance of a 9,899 majority Mr Howarth looks safe. No chances are being taken but at the Ringland Labour Club conversation inevitably turns to the size of the majority.

Labour rejects Scottish union 'wish lists'

Stephen Goodwin

George Robertson, Shadow Secretary of State for Scotland, yesterday tried to bury the Tory image of a Labour Party in hock to the trade unions with a blunt rejection of public spending "wish lists" paraded before this week's Scottish Trades Union Congress conference. There could be no "recess from reality", Mr Robertson told delegates to the centenary congress in Glasgow, which has backed calls for a four-day week, a national minimum wage of well over £4 an hour, renationalisation of the railways and further investment in industry and training. "The inescapable reality is that we cannot repair the economic damage of 18 years of failure in the first 18 weeks or even 18 months of a new Labour government," he said. Delegates gave Mr Robertson a polite reception but many were clearly irritated by the directness of his language. Sandy Boyle of the TUC

General Council said Mr Robertson had "over egged it". Nobody in the STUC was in any doubt about the relationship with the Labour Party and nothing the Congress had decided had anything to do with "fantasy", Mr Boyle said. Mr Robertson wove the courage of the pioneers of Scottish trade unionism in tackling inequalities in wealth and health with the need for moderation today. "We owe them the discipline and hard-headedness and the coolness of judgement to take their legacy on and improve and better it for generations still to come." He said Tory scaremongering would only be exposed as petty and without foundation if there was self-discipline and control. "If there is an inflation of expectations of what can be done ... and if there are unreasonable and unfulfillable demands made then the beneficiaries will only be those who want to hold back the tide." Repeating the "no favours,

only fairness" theme, Mr Robertson said if a Labour government was elected it would be to eliminate the "cronyism" which had so corroded public life for the last 18 years. "There is no way we will replace their cronyism for cronyisms of any other kind." Nor could there be any magic carpet of unrealistic wish lists flying to days gone by. STUC leaders drew comfort from Mr Robertson's reminder that although a Labour government would inherit the Tories' immediate spending totals it would not inherit their priorities or policies. A key demand at the conference was for a national minimum wage at substantially above any figure contemplated by the Labour leadership. Although a proposal from the public service workers' union Unison was dropped from the agenda a similar proposal starting at 50 per cent of median male earnings - £4.42 an hour today - rising to two-thirds of earnings slipped through.

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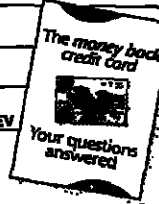
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AROUND THE REGIONS

Seaside with marginal attraction

For voters in Tynemouth, rubbing shoulders with famous politicians is becoming almost commonplace. The political big guns are being wheeled out at a rate of three a week in this most marginal of constituencies. Hardly a day goes by without a Westminster star mucking in with the local butcher or shaking hands with punters on Whitley Bay seafront. Michael Portillo, Peter Lilley, William Hague and Robin Cook have all been and gone. Others of even greater standing will follow. The electorate are being left in no doubt as to how precious their vote is, by the Tories desperate to maintain a lone patch of blue in the sea of red that dominates the political map on Tyneside, and by Labour who know if they can't win seats like this they will never win power. Neville Trotter, the outgoing Tory MP, is retiring after 22 years and with him a substantial personal loyalty vote could disappear. He leaves his would-be successor Martin Callanan a

seat that has not been in Labour hands since 1950, but one with a majority that has been whittled down to a mere 597 in 1992. For the Labour candidate, Alan Campbell, the outlook, in what national polls would suggest should be a comfortable gain, has been clouded by boundary changes. The rock solid Labour Riverside ward has been removed from the battle zone and put into the North Tyneside seat. That leaves him needing to conjure a swing of 3.2 per cent - a notional deficit of around 3,500 - to snatch the seat. The Tynemouth count will provide a welcome touch of drama to election night in the North-east. Our only excitement usually comes from observing whichever of the two Sunderland seats is in its traditional race to be the first in the country to declare a result. Local Tories are divided

over how the party will fare. William Storey, 62, secretary of Tynemouth Golf Club says he, like many other Conservative voters, is going through a period of soul-searching. "I have always voted Conservative, but now I am thinking very deeply about it," he said. "I find previously staunch Tories are disenchanted with the party. While the majority fear a Labour government, they are finding it very difficult to back Major after years and years of unquestioned support." Edna Halliday, 52, who owns an oyster shop in Whitley Bay says she and other business in the area are still experiencing a slump in trade for which the Government must take some of the blame. "I have tried all sorts to get business to pick up but I've had no help from anyone. I vote Conservative because I have worked hard all my life to

make a living. Labour have changed, but when it comes to crossing the box, people will still go with the Tories." Mr Callanan, 35, is looking for most of his votes in the affluent, white-collar, coastal wards of Whitley Bay, Monkseaton and Tynemouth. He has personally championed a campaign to create a new council for the coast by abolishing the Labour-run North Tyneside authority - a move supported by a 20,000 signature petition. Mr Campbell, 39, a father of two and a teacher, is more concerned about attracting jobs to the area which has already seen major inward investment and work for 2,000 in the form of the giant Siemens microchip plant. A poll of 500 Tynemouth voters by Market Research UK for the *Journal* at the start of the campaign suggested the Tories had slipped 22 points behind Labour into third place, with voters in every age group, class, occupation and location turning to Tony Blair. Simon Bird The Journal, Newcastle

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Defector's tales fuel Seoul's paranoia

Richard Lloyd Parry
Seoul

Since his arrival in Seoul on Sunday, South Koreans have learnt a good deal about the highest-ranking North Korean defector, Hwang Jang Yop, although it is not the kind of intelligence most had in mind.

They know what time he gets up (5am) and they know what he has for breakfast (a glass of ginseng juice). They know he has a light appetite and that he is in good health for a 74-year-old.

But apart from a few dubious leaks, and an alarming speech he gave on his arrival, they know none of the things Mr Hwang was supposed to tell them — about the workings of the North Korean regime, and its leader, Kim Jong Il.

In fact, since his defection to the South Korean consulate in Peking in February, the Hwang affair has revealed more about the paranoia and vulnerabilities of South Koreans than it has about their estranged brethren.

The latest "revelation" came yesterday, in a newspaper report about a letter from Mr Hwang allegedly passed to South Korean intelligence in August. "North Korea is capable of scorching South Korea with nuclear weapons, chemical weapons and rockets. If the United States intervenes, it plans to scorch Japan too."

The statements are in keeping with Mr Hwang's declaration on arriving in Seoul that he had come "to block war by joining hands with brothers in the south."

But this news had little impact. First, it is unclear why Mr

Hwang would have run the risk of writing such a document and how it got to Seoul.

Secondly, as a philosopher and intellectual, it is not the kind of information to which he would have had access. Finally, the timing and content of the report makes it suspicious: at a particularly sticky moment for South Korea's own political establishment, it is just the kind of thing to distract from the problems of the government.

The Seoul administration has been badly compromised by bribery allegations involving bank loans to a recently bankrupt steel company.

But media interest in the scandal has been almost eclipsed by speculation about a mysterious list which Mr Hwang is rumoured to have brought with him.

The list is said to carry the names of prominent South Korean figures, including members of the opposition, who are in the pay of the North.

Government spokesmen deny the existence of such a list, but the rumour has been enough to provoke anxious squeals from opposition politicians about witch-hunts. For the time being, Mr Hwang is giving the South a great deal to think about, before he has spilled a single bean.

South Korean diplomats arrived back in Seoul from New York yesterday after failing to secure North Korean participation in talks on peace on the peninsula. Officials from Pyongyang refused to agree to the talks, intended to include China and the US, unless they received more aid to alleviate serious food shortages.



Earthy approach: Pauline Tranje sitting in a mock sewer at the Children's Museum in Manila during a programme on World's Earth Day yesterday. Children were given an idea of what such a structure is like, to help educate them on how to save the environment. Photograph: AP

US imposes sanctions on Burmese junta

Mary Dejevsky
Washington

The US yesterday said it would go it alone in imposing economic sanctions on Burma in protest at "persistent human-rights abuses" by the military government. Madeleine Albright, Secretary of State, said the measure "will deal a further blow to investor confidence" in Burma.

The decision follows the frustration of US efforts to co-ordinate international sanctions. Japan and members of the Association of South-East Asian Nations in particular were reluctant to join any sanctions effort. Last week the UN Human Rights Commission passed a res-

olution expressing concern about arbitrary executions in Burma, deaths and torture of people in police custody, and forced child labour.

Burma's government has been criticised by the West ever since it refused to recognise the results of elections in 1990 that would have brought the opposition National League for Democracy to power. The co-founder and opposition leader, Aung San Suu Kyi, spent six years under house arrest in Rangoon and still faces restrictions. Opposition demonstrations have been violently broken up but none of these actions precipitated the sanctions, which are mostly limited to a ban on new US investment in Burma. Existing projects are not af-

ected. The US is the fourth-largest foreign investor in Burma.

The likelihood of sanctions was signalled by Ms Albright last week. The Burmese military had responded to calls for more democracy by "placing even greater limits on the right of political expression and by throwing peaceful demonstrators in jail".

"Burmese leaders are on notice," she warned, "that unless the clouds of repression are lifted, they will face investment sanctions under US law."

Ms Albright's style of direct speaking, which has recently included warnings to Iraq over its flouting of UN resolutions and to China over its treatment of Hong Kong after it takes con-

trol on 1 June, has created the impression that the human-rights question is once again becoming an important ingredient of US foreign policy.

Her words, however, are also pointing up what some critics of the administration see as a contradiction in policy.

They note that when Vice-President Al Gore visited China recently the subject of China's observance of human rights was absent and China did not feel constrained to offer concessions, as it has in the past, by freeing any political prisoners. China, say the critics, because of its size and importance to the US, is being judged by a more lenient standard than smaller, less important countries.

Algerian rebels kill 93 in village atrocity

Algiers (AP) — An armed group massacred 93 Algerian villagers yesterday, including women and children, in the bloodiest such attack since the start of the Islamic insurgency five years ago, authorities said. The massacre was in the village of Haouch Mokfi, near Bougara, 12 miles from Algiers.

Members of a family who fled described the group as Islamic guerrillas who killed villagers because they refused to "collaborate." Armed groups depend for their survival on the aid of citizens who provide food, money and other necessities.

"We have no more to give. They've already taken everything," said a member of the family, which arrived in the capital.

Village massacres around Algiers have become a prevalent form of violence since the start of the insurgency. The Haouch Mokfi massacre was the biggest single mass killing since the birth of the insurgency after the army cancelled 1992 legislative elections to thwart a victory by an Islamic fundamentalist party.

At least 60,000 people have been killed in the conflict. President Liamine Zeroual has scheduled the first legislative vote since then for 5 June.

The government statement, describing the massacre as "horrible," said a gang of criminals stormed Haouch Boukhelef-Khemisti farming community in Bougara district. "They (the victims) were savagely assassinated by knives by a gang of terrorists," said the statement, carried by state media. "The attack showed a savagery without any precedent," the government said, urging people to be vigilant and on their guard. Officials use the term "terrorists" or "criminal" to describe fundamentalists who have been fighting to topple the government for five years.

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Yeltsin courts new friend in the East

Helen Womack
Moscow

The Chinese leader, Jiang Zemin, arrived in Moscow yesterday for a visit which is intended not only to improve relations between Moscow and Peking but also to show the West that Russia, unable to stop Nato expansion, is capable of finding friends elsewhere.

China, which used to compete with the Soviet Union for domination of the Communist world, is happy to play the game with the new Russia for economic reasons and because it dislikes Western criticism of its human rights record.

The red carpet was rolled out yesterday when President Jiang, accompanied by his wife and by senior Chinese officials, arrived at Vnukovo-2, the airport for VIPs on the edge of Moscow. Mr Jiang will hold meetings with President Boris Yeltsin today.

He was met by Prime Minister Viktor Chernomyrdin, just back from Prague where he heard the Czechs, former subjects of the Warsaw Pact, saying politely but firmly that they

regarded Nato membership as vital to their national security.

Even after last month's Helsinki summit, when President Bill Clinton sought to reassure Russia that the West was not trying to isolate it, the Kremlin has continued to object to the eastward expansion of Nato and pointedly develop other relationships. First Mr Yeltsin, to the alarm of his liberal advisers, moved closer to a union with politically repressive and economically backward Belarus. Now he is turning his attention to China.

Long before Nato announced plans to expand, the then Soviet leader Mikhail Gorbachev healed the rift between the two giants of the east by visiting Peking shortly before the Tiananmen Square massacre in 1989. Mr Yeltsin also travelled there last year, advised by his Foreign Minister, Yevgeny Primakov, that Russia should not concentrate on ties with the West to the exclusion of other friendships.

The Russians and the Chinese have many areas of mutual interest. This week, Mr Yeltsin and Mr Jiang will sign

a treaty, together with the leaders of three former Soviet republics - Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan and Tajikistan - on the reduction of armed forces along the former Soviet-Chinese border. In trade talks, Russia will try to sell more arms to China and persuade the Chinese to raise the quality of the consumer goods they sell on the Russian market.

But a political declaration which Mr Yeltsin and Mr Jiang plan to sign is clearly intended to challenge America's dominant role in the world since the collapse of Soviet Communism and the end of the Cold War.

"Russia and China will express their vision of how to form the new international order in the 21st century and will speak out against claims by any country to the role of absolute leader," Mr Yeltsin's spokesman, Sergei Yastrzhembsky, said.

The Chinese ambassador to Moscow, Li Fenglin, added: "This new type of relationship includes a refusal to take part in military blocs, ruling out confrontation and any menace to third parties."



Red letter day: An elderly Russian outside Lenin's mausoleum in Red Square yesterday with a portrait of the Soviet state's founder as communists marked the 127th anniversary of the revolutionary leader's birthday. Photograph: Michael Eustafiev

Fishing for the answer to Italy's shower curtain mystery

ROME DAYS

You learn the strangest things by moving house. Like the enigma of the non-existent Italian shower curtain. Or the even deeper enigma of the non-existent Italian furniture. Or, most bizarrely, the finer points of fish-gutting in a public fountain. So many piercing insights into utter trivia. And we've only moved a few hundred yards down the street.

Broadly speaking, there are two ways of finding a flat in Rome. The first is called pot luck, and involves stumbling upon some kind of opportunity. It would be awfully tedious if it were not so kind as to suit her panoramic attic with extensive roof terraces for a couple of years, all for the price of a couple of cappuccinos a day.

The other, more usual, route involves linking up with a series of louche middlemen with greased-back hair and mobile phones, and looking at a lot of expensive rat holes with no visible signs of running water. "Ah, you wanted windows in

nicely illustrates a broader issue: the lack of a proper consumer culture for household items. There are a few furniture megastores in the suburbs that do endless promotions on local teleshopping channels. But for even a hint of good taste one is obliged to do the rounds of endless small designer shops and artisans' studios.

The process is actually rather pleasant, if time-consuming, involving several visits, oodles of small talk and gallons of coffee.

We had vaguely entertained

the idea of moving, until we discovered that there isn't any on the market except for ferociously expensive stuff dating back to the 16th century, and most of that is probably fake. For reasons too dumb to connect to the Romans' historic inability to produce anything of value except by nabbing it from elsewhere, all the furniture on offer comes from France, or Denmark, or eastern Europe - scooping up bargains in Romania is particularly trendy among antiquarians at the moment.

As luck would have it, we were moving from one street full of furniture makers to another full of antique dealers, so we didn't have to look very far. Two years of idle chitchat in the street paid off handsomely as we acquired not only a beautiful handmade bookcase at a knock-down price, but also three trout and a magnificent pike straight out of Lake Bracciano, all courtesy of our fishing-crazy furniture maker friend Franco.

And here came the greatest challenge to our street cred in the neighbourhood. I didn't fancy spilling pike guts all over our brand-new kitchen, so I had to clear out the nearest in the neighbourhood and try to look as though I had been gutting fish all my life.

What I do know is that living in a tight-knit urban community is an art that requires constant refining. Assiduous readers of this column might remember how I got around the tortuous rules for heavy rubbish removal last time we moved by bribing two delivery men to take away our empty boxes. This time around, I went one better. I made friends with the head of the local garbage office and got him to clear away our boxes for nothing more than a cup of coffee and a shot of grappa at the nearest bar. I would have offered him a slice of freshly gutted pike, but strangely he wasn't interested.

Andrew Gumbel

Buying furniture involves oodles of small talk and gallons of coffee

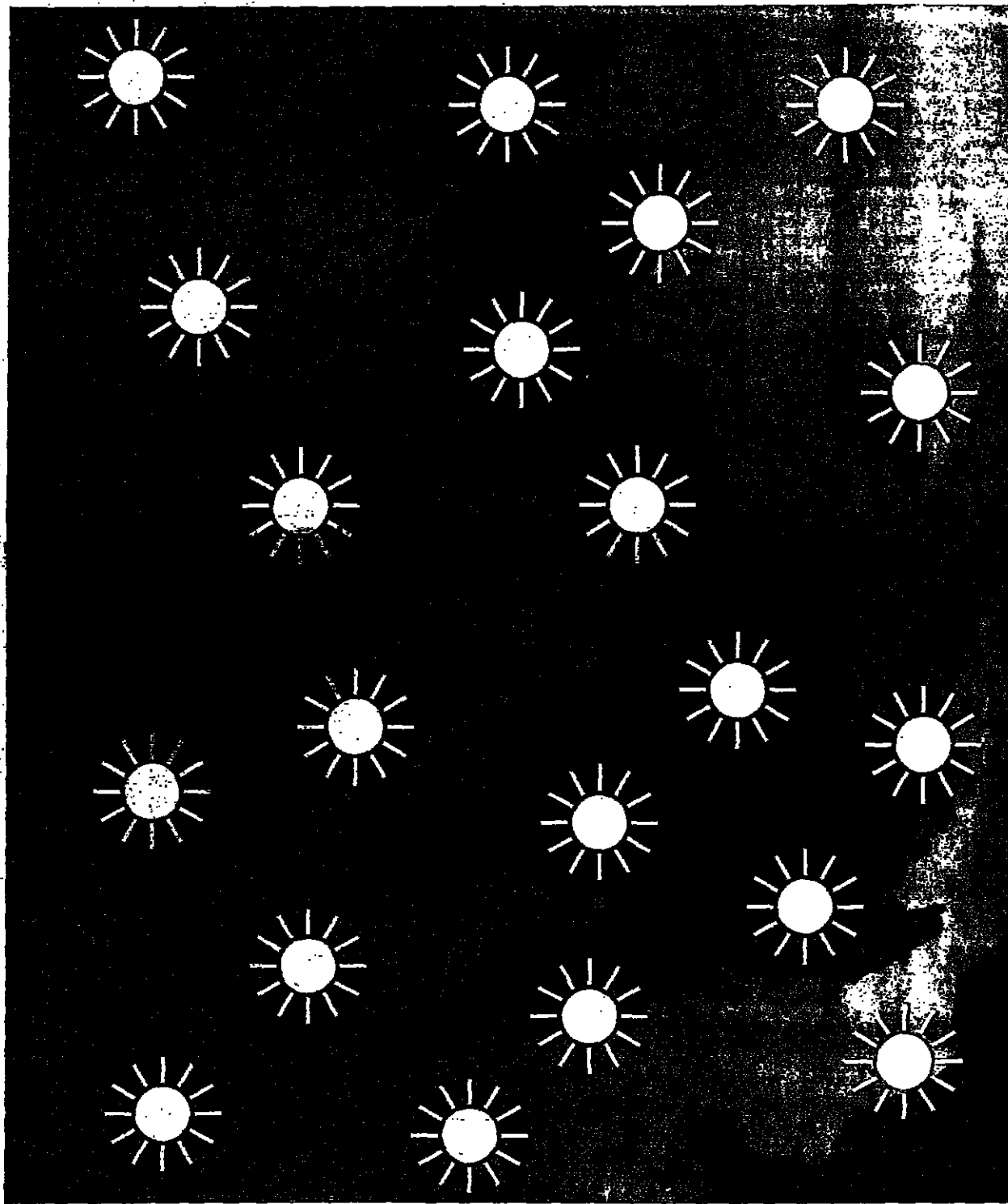
your flat," exclaimed one particularly unsavoury character. "Well of course some people are a bit fussy, aren't they?"

The more places we looked at the more peculiarities we noticed about Roman households. Like their addiction to two or even three bathrooms, even if this means the kitchen is scarcely big enough to strain a pot of pasta, and the living room is pushed halfway into the passage. Why? I'm all in favour of cleanliness, but I really don't see why two people living together can't share their washing facilities.

We never did get a convincing answer to that one. But we did find out why there isn't a single shower curtain to be found. Apparently there's no such thing as a ready-made shower curtain, so the only way to have one is to buy the material, cut it to size, make the loops and stick the whole thing on a specially cut metal bar. Since nobody can be bothered with all that hassle, Rome ends up with a lot of wet bathroom floors.

The shower curtain problem

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Clinton flies in with promises of help for devastated Grand Forks

Mary Dejevsky
Washington

President Bill Clinton went to the flood- and fire-ravaged city of Grand Forks in North Dakota yesterday, with promises of a Marshall-plan style rebuilding programme and a sympathetic ear for residents who may never return to their homes. He was greeted by a local newspaper headline, saying: "Welcome to Grand Forks, Mr President. Welcome to our nightmare".

That Mr Clinton - who has tended to delegate natural disaster visits to Vice-President (and future presidential candidate?) Al Gore during his second term and who is still on crutches following his knee injury - made the trip himself is a measure of the magnitude of the devastation, even in a country of real-life disaster spectacles, and the way it has gripped the American public.

For several days now, the scenes from Grand Forks, where the Red River is running almost 30ft above flood level, have been apocalyptic. Main streets resemble broad rivers, office blocks are several storeys deep in water, suburbs show only red and grey roofs. Older houses are described as looking like tiny medieval castles with moats around them: the whole city as a "ghost town sitting inside a vast chocolate swamp".

Over the weekend, television news showed improbable sequences of city streets submerged under water, while flames spewed from solid brick buildings. First the flood, then the fire, then the plague? was the emotive burden of accompanying commentary.

What caused the fires is not known, but what prevented their dousing was floodwater prevented fire engines reaching the city centre, obscured the fire hydrants and reduced the water pressure, rendering hoses useless.



Bleak outlook: Howard Hoff, wading through the streets, has refused to leave his Grand Forks home in the evacuation

Photograph: AFP

The floods also breached the city's sewers, making evacuation a priority. By Monday, most of the 50,000 population who remained were subject to "mandatory evacuation". People who had stood on rooftops to catch sight of helicopters trying to douse flames the previous evening were roundly scolded on local radio for their irre-

sponsibility. Only 10 per cent of the city is unaffected.

With the sewerage and other services out of action, there are predictions that much of the city will have to be rebuilt and that it will be months before people will be allowed to return. Estimates of the cost vary from a conservative \$400m to more than \$1bn (£250m-

£625m). The pessimistic ask whether the city will ever be habitable again.

As with other recent United States floods, the region of Grand Forks is no innocent in matters of flood prevention and planning. It is a threat people live with. Even this year, with a combination of late and very heavy snow followed by a rapid thaw, it was

hoped that a massive volunteer effort to reinforce dikes and build banks of sandbags might save the city. At the end of last week, however, Grand Forks had to concede defeat to the Red River. This was not just another flood, people said, as they abandoned their homes, but the sort of disaster that happens only once in 500 years.

significant shorts

Whitewater prosecutors seek to extend inquiry

Whitewater prosecutors said they had gathered "extensive evidence" of possible obstruction of justice and asked a judge to extend the investigating grand jury's term by six months. The office of counsel Kenneth Starr cited the obstruction inquiry and new information from James McDougal, the Clintons' former business partner, in requesting that the jury's term be extended to 7 November; it is set to expire on 7 May. McDougal and his ex-wife Susan were convicted of fraud last year in \$3m in loans from federally backed lenders for Whitewater, a real-estate development. The Clintons have not been charged but are under investigation in Congress.

AP - Little Rock

Argentina angers Falklanders

The Argentine Foreign Minister, Guido Di Tella, angered Falkland Islanders by promoting his political "charm offensive" on the birthday of the Queen. A letter said: "I would like to repeat my sincere belief that we are getting closer to the point where differences ought to be addressed. I am sure that if we do that, we will find a mutually acceptable solution. I think we all now understand better our respective positions, limitations and possibilities."

Reuters - Port Stanley

Japan row over mad-cow alert

Dozens of Japanese brain-surgery patients died from a rare contagion linked to "mad-cow" disease after the Health and Welfare Ministry failed to act on a US warning, news reports said. In 1987 ministry officials knew of a warning that Creutzfeldt-Jakob disease could be contracted from transplants of the membrane that covers the brain and upper spinal column, but said the ministry failed to take timely safety measures, which its own research now indicates as the most likely cause of 43 cases of the disease since 1985.

AP - Tokyo

Saddam son's recovery hopes

Uday, eldest son of President Saddam Hussein of Iraq, said he expected fully to recover from injuries sustained in a December assassination attempt and hoped to be walking within days following surgery on Sunday. Uday said doctors operated on his left leg, while officials had said German and Iraqi doctors were removing a bullet lodged near his spine. There was no explanation for the discrepancy.

AP - Baghdad

Bahraini children arrested

The Bahrain Islamic Freedom Movement, an opposition group, said 20 Shia Muslims, mostly children, had been arrested in the Gulf state this month in connection with anti-government protests.

Reuters - London

Ice-hockey chief shot dead

Valentin Sych, head of the Russian Ice Hockey Federation, was shot dead in an apparent contract killing near his villa outside Moscow, police said. His wife was wounded in the attack but managed to summon help by mobile phone.

Reuters - Moscow

Teenagers lure pizza deliverymen to their deaths

David Wilkinson
Associated Press

Franklin, New Jersey — Two teenagers "looking for a victim" lured two pizza deliverymen to an abandoned house and killed them in a random spray of bullets, blood and pizza.

The 17- and 18-year-olds are accused of phoning four pizza parlours before they found one that would deliver to the remote, rural house.

livery men drove up and lowered the car window to hand out the pizza, the boys ambushed them, police said.

"I don't know what they had on their minds," said Police Chief Pete Vahaly, who is more used to responding to domestic violence and shoplifting complaints in this usually quiet north-western New Jersey town of about 5,000 people.

After the men were shot in the back, they were dragged out

placed face down on the ground and shot in the head. The last shots were described as being "like an execution," though police said that both victims were probably already dead.

Georgio Gallara, 24, who owned Tony's Pizza and Pasta in neighbouring Hardyston, and his employee, Jeremy Gior-

dano, 22, were killed. At least eight shots were fired. Police were called to the abandoned house by somebody who saw their car and thought there had been an accident.

The teenagers were arrested early on Monday at their homes after calls to pizza parlours were traced to a phone booth

outside a doughnut shop, where they were spotted by witnesses. At one of the other pizza shops, manager Tim Kiester said the caller had trouble answering routine questions about his address and phone number.

Mr Kiester said he had a "gut feeling" something was wrong and told his employee not to

make the delivery. The 18-year-old, Thomas J Koskovich was charged with two counts of murder and weapons violations. The 17-year-old was held on juvenile charges. Both pleaded not guilty and remained in custody. Sussex County prosecutor Dennis O'Leary said robbery was not a motive.

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US

Mary Thomas

Many singers enjoy rewarding careers in classical music but it is given to few to push forward musical boundaries in the way Mary Thomas did so successfully.

At 10 years old, she was entertaining Swansea audiences by playing the piano, and regular photographs in the local press announced yet another exam passed with distinction. Her mother Polly, a stalwart of the chapel choir, encouraged her musical child to sing and dance and take part in all the festivals and cistieddods which South Wales had to offer.

After matriculating, Mary won a scholarship to the Royal Academy of Music, though when she began studying it had still not been decided whether she would become a singer or a pianist. Gradually however the warmth and quality of her voice made a career as a soprano inevitable. The academy awarded her the coveted oral prize, the first time it had been given to a singer, and, after a singing debut as a student in Mendelssohn's *St Paul*, she was in demand for oratorio before graduating.

At a time when serious young musicians did not, or dared not, cross over the barriers between classical, light music and jazz, Thomas happily disregarded such stuffy boundaries. She enjoyed and actively participated in every kind of music. Her mastery of other craft was indisputable, so when she chose to tour with Perry Como or Guy Mitchell, or when her distinctive voice was heard in jingles for InterCity rail and fizzy drinks, eyebrows may have been raised but it did no harm to her career.

She had a wicked and somewhat risqué sense of humour and at the backing and jingle sessions was very much one of the lads. Sharing a house with her, I used to wait eagerly for her return to be regaled with the latest jokes doing the rounds. In early days when money was

rather short, we formed a "sisters act" at the piano and appeared in cabaret at Rotary dinners where we slipped in the more suitable of the jokes.

Singing the standard soprano oratorio and lieder repertoire, Thomas quickly became a popular and frequent broadcaster. She sang the annual BBC *Messiah*, appeared in the Proms at the Albert Hall and was booked for the series *Friday Night is Music Night* and *Land of Song*. She often featured as the singer with the Nash Ensemble and the Philip Jones Brass Ensemble but it was when she joined the avant-garde group the Fires of London and became the muse of their conductor Peter Maxwell Davies that musical frontiers were extended.

Maxwell Davies became enchanted by her ability. "Without Mary Thomas," he said, "most of the music I wrote for the Fires just wouldn't have been in existence. She was a wonderful inspiration and I will be forever grateful for her unique lyrical and dramatic qualities which always excited me to create works for her special artistry."

The first of several juicy works he wrote for her was *Miss Donathorne's Maggot* (1974), a solo musical version of the head Australian bride's story. Liked on her wedding day, she lived thereafter in her wedding dress among the disintegrating remains of the wedding feast. The critics of the London broadcasts were unanimous in their praise. "A devastating singer and actress," "a superb soprano who is as good as an actress," "an extraordinary vocal, musical and histrionic performance".

The most demanding piece Maxwell Davies conceived for Thomas was *The Medium* (1981), a 45-minute unaccompanied musical theatre drama during which the audience is left to decide whether the medium is hearing voices or whether



Demanding: Thomas in Peter Maxwell Davies's *The Medium*, 1981.

Photograph: Gurney-Woods

she is the mistress who murdered her child. "Mary Thomas raved, pleaded, imagined, chanted, shouted, crawled and sang with incredible concentration and conviction... unquestionably one of the great vocal virtuosi of the day," wrote *Time Out*.

On one occasion, after bringing the house down with a performance of *The Medium* in New York, Thomas went on to a party with Leonard Bernstein who had been in the audience and he and "La Thomas", as he called her,

played jazz duets at the piano until the small hours.

Mary Thomas shared her ability and knowledge. Her warmth and friendliness made her a popular teacher. She was a professor at the Royal Academy of Music but had also for many years taught actors and actresses how to put across a number. She coached many stars including Twiggy for *The Boy Friend* (1971), Elizabeth Seal for *The Pyjama Game*, and, more recently, Honor Blackman.

The cellist Edward Holmes, also from Swansea, was Thomas's lifelong partner and they had a house in Swansea as well as in London. If one thing apart from her talent marked Mary Thomas out, it was that success changed her not a jot. She continued to play the organ in church every Sunday and kept her strong Welsh accent and sense of fun to the end.

Lynne East Rake

Averil Mary Thomas, singer, born Swansea 2 August 1932; married Edward Holmes; died London 17 April 1997.

Henry Lang

When Henry Lang was appointed Secretary to the New Zealand Treasury in 1952, he became the youngest ever head of its civil service. He was part of that remarkable Viennese diaspora that was to contribute so much to the countries in which they settled.

Lang was born in Vienna in 1919, just five months after the end of the First World War. Life was comfortable as his father Robert was a prosperous manufacturer living in the affluent, wine-growing suburb of Grinzing. The marriage later broke up and his mother married the architect Ernst Pischke.

Lang was educated at a Real Gymnasium which emphasised studies in the humanities and engineering. By the end of the 1930s, he had matriculated and had served a year in the army when Hitler invaded Austria. He was difficult after the Anschluss but Pischke had personal influence in Berlin to get the family out in 1938. Lang, his mother Anna and his stepfather escaped to New Zealand, arriving in 1939. Pischke also ensured that Lang's father was able to leave.

The New Zealand way of life must have seemed strange after the formality of Vienna. Lang told the New Zealand author Ann Beaglehole, in her fascinating study of refugees *A Small Price To Pay* (1988), that he was accustomed to a degree of formality and rigid class distinctions. He was surprised by guests who called in wearing their "gardenia" clothes. "In Europe one had a gardener to do the gardening and one didn't go visiting without a tie."

Despite not speaking much English, he quickly adjusted to the country and worked to pay for his university studies. Within three years of arriving he married Octavia Turk and two years later, in 1944, he graduated from Victoria University, Wellington with a Bachelor of Arts and Bachelor of Commerce degrees. He planned various enterprises including a sauerkraut business which ended up with the barrel the sauerkraut was soaked in rotting in the shed.

Lang continued military service and served two years in the Royal New Zealand Air Force. Demobilised in 1946, he joined

the New Zealand government and held various economic appointments before going to the Treasury in 1952. His rise there was rapid and three years later he was appointed Economic Adviser to the New Zealand High Commissioner in London.

It was then the key diplomatic post as the majority of New Zealand's trade was still with Britain. Now with a young family, he enjoyed life for three years in Dulwich, south London.

In 1948 he became Secretary to the Treasury and head of the New Zealand civil service. It was a job to be both a Permanent and Cabinet Secretary.

Lang presided over economic matters at a turbulent time for New Zealand. The economy suffered two severe blows. Britain joined the EEC and New Zealand had to search out new markets for its dairy products and meat. Secondly, the oil crisis hit a country with, at that time, no indigenous gas or oil production.

The Labour Finance Minister and then Prime Minister Bill Rowling and Lang worked well together and they became life-long friends. But then Robert Muldoon swept back to power in 1975. The relationship between Muldoon and Lang was stormy, and Lang stunned the country by taking early retirement in 1977. Always the loyal civil servant, he refused to be publicly vilified by Muldoon's tribute stating that he was the best Secretary to the Treasury he had ever known.

Lang started a new career with relish. He spent five years as Visiting Professor of Economics at Victoria University. He enjoyed teaching students because he genuinely liked young people and related to them in a quite remarkable way. He took up directorships including two of the country's largest companies, New Zealand Forest Products and Challenge Corporation.

Lang saw the futility of the protectionist policies pursued by the Muldoon government of 1975-84. He acted as an adviser to the Labour government, under David Lange, which threw open the New Zealand economy. However, he did not like "Rogernomics" - the coun-

try's extreme monetarism - because it lacked humanity. He played an active part in the development of the arts in New Zealand. This was crowned by joining the board, chaired by Bill Rowling, of the ambitious, new national museum under construction in Wellington.

Lang's stepfather Pischke was a renowned architect, influenced by the Bauhaus style. He was the potter Lucie Rie's mentor, had designed her Viennese home and the Lang family were her close friends. Henry Lang always visited her on his frequent trips to London.

He was last in London in September for the wedding of his photographer daughter Frances, a contributor to the *Independent on Sunday*. Frances married Mark Brand in Westminster

Abbey only to perish in the Peru air crash on their honeymoon.

Henry Lang epitomised the spirit of a country built by immigration. He went from refugee to head of the civil service and contributed to the country's development not only in economics but also in nurturing the arts.

Lindsay Oller
Henry George Lang, economist, civil servant and businessman; born Vienna 3 March 1919; Economic Adviser to New Zealand High Commissioner, London 1955-58; Secretary of Treasury and Head of NZ Civil Service 1968-77; CB 1977; Visiting Professor of Economics, Victoria University of Wellington 1977-82; ONZ 1989; married 1942 Octavia Turk (one son, three daughters, and one daughter deceased); died Wellington, New Zealand 16 April 1997.

Photograph: Gurney-Woods

Eddie Quigley

He never cut the most athletic of figures on the football field, but that didn't stop Eddie Quigley becoming, for a time, the most expensive player in the history of the British game.

In fact, the burly Lancastrian belied his ponderous appearance and misleadingly languid air to become one of the most proficient and sought-after goalkeepers of the post-war era, arguably deserving more international recognition than the two England "B" caps which went his way. In some ways Quigley was ahead of his time, a deep-thinking, deep-thinking marksman blessed with subtle passing skills, the type of operator destined to become fashionable in the mid-1950s, when his playing days were drawing to a close.

He began his career in 1941 with his home-town club, Bury, as a full-back but his destiny became clear one day at Millwall when, switched to centre-forward, he scored five goals. Thereafter Quigley remained in the front line - either as spearhead or, more often, as an inside-forward - and soon caught the eye of more fashionable clubs.

In October 1947 he joined Sheffield Wednesday for £12,000, going on to score freely for two years, but it was his next move which catapulted Quigley into the headlines. When he switched



Quigley: ahead of his time
Photograph: Hulton Getty

to Preston North End in December 1949, the fee was £26,500, a British transfer record. The idea was that he would forge a stylish partnership with the marvellous Tom Finney but, in a footballing twist, the two never gelled. Thus, after helping Preston to lift the Second Division title in 1951, he moved on again, this time to Blackburn Rovers - his fourth Division Two club - for £20,000.

At Ewood Park, Quigley hit prime form, flourishing especially under the attacking regime of the manager Johnny Carey, and netting 95 times in 166 senior outings before returning to Bury for his last campaign, as a 35-year-old in 1956.

Always a serious student of the game, Quigley appeared ideal management material and duly he spent six years learning his trade with non-League Mossley. Then, in 1962, he returned to Football League ranks as Bury's youth coach and chief scout, unearthing such talents as Colin Bell and Alec Lindsay, both of whom would go on to play for England.

Quigley's first berth as a boss was at Stockport, where he moved in April 1966, remaining at Edgeley Park for just six months during which he did much of the spadework towards County's Fourth Division title triumph of 1966/67. However, by the time the trophy was presented, he had departed to Blackburn, where he became chief coach and assistant manager to Jack Mansell, who was soon to resign.

After a brief spell as caretaker, during which Rovers narrowly missed promotion to the First Division, Quigley was confirmed as fully fledged boss in April 1967. He had earned a reputation as a shrewd tactician and much was expected of him, but the next two terms proved frustrating, with promising starts followed by springtime fade-outs.

Come 1970, with the team struggling, Quigley swapped jobs with the general manager

Carey. True, he had responsibility for scouting and the youth system but he was never happy in a mainly administrative role, preferring the day-to-day involvement with the senior side. At the end of 1970/71, against a background of severe financial constraint, Blackburn were relegated to the Third Division for the first time in their history and both Carey and Quigley were sacked.

The latter, who had been criticised for being over-reliant on blackboard theory, returned to the fray as manager of Stockport in 1976 and derived enormous satisfaction when his comparatively humble charges knocked Blackburn out of the League Cup at Ewood Park. Sadly, a slump followed and he was sacked in 1977. Quigley went on to scout for Blackburn, under Howard Kendall, and Blackpool before retiring in the early 1980s.

Ivan Ponting

Edward Quigley, footballer and manager; born Bury, Lancashire 13 July 1921; played for Bury 1941-47, Sheffield Wednesday 1947-49, Preston North End 1949-51, Blackburn Rovers 1951-56, Bury 1956, managed Stockport County 1966 and 1976-77, Blackburn Rovers 1967-70; married (one son, one daughter); died Blackpool 18 April 1997.

Fabian Dobles was one of Costa Rica's leading writers - the most prolific and the most celebrated.

His works include short stories, novels, plays, poetry, essays and articles. It is in his stories and novels that he made his major contribution, focusing on social and political problems, observing the changes from traditional values to modern thinking, and expressing an intimate knowledge and love of Costa Rica, its people and language.

Most people in England know little about Costa Rica. It rarely hits the international headlines. Dobles regarded himself as "a big fish in a small pond", but did see some of his stories published in anthologies abroad alongside those of other Latin American writers such as Marquez, Borges, Faulkner, Quirga and Asturias. However his novels were not published in translation until his last, *Years like Brief Days*, was published in English in 1986.

Fabian was born in 1918 in the small country town of San Antonio de Belen, the seventh child of the local doctor. Some of the details of his childhood and youth are related in his final novel, a pseudo-autobiography, telling how he was forced to become a seafarer by his father as a fifteen-

year-old in 1933.

This experience gave him an early realisation that his father's traditional values were not his - a theme he was later to elaborate in other works. He left the Church and went to university in San Jose to study Law, where he made a name for himself as a poet and storyteller. In 1943 his first novel, *Aguas turbias* ("Troubled Waters"), written in the vernacular, represented Costa Rica in the Latin American competition for Novels. This and other early works established him as an accomplished writer dealing with matters of social significance in local setting. In 1950 came his best-known novel to date, *El*

Shio de las Abras ("The Siege of the Clear Land"), which has so far been through 10 editions. It tackles the problem of change in country areas caused by deforestation and exploitation of the land and the campesinos by ruthless land-owners. A left-wing intellectual, Dobles had to struggle to survive as a writer during a period of considerable social and political change. He fell foul of the authorities through his social realism and political alignment. (His dramatic 1967 novel *En el San Juan River are Sharks*, for example, depicts the bravery of Costa Rican guerrilla fighters who joined forces with Nicaraguan rebels against the Sandinista regime.) So he was obliged to support his growing family by doing a variety of other jobs including work in industry, commerce and agriculture.

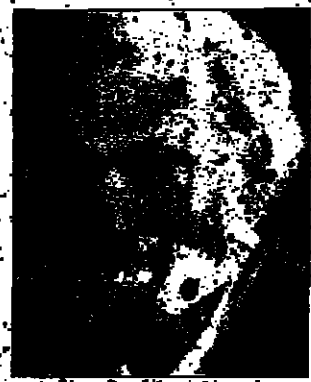
This wide experience deepened his understanding and appreciation of popular traditions and language, and led in 1956 to *Historias de Tasa Mundo* ("The Stories of Tasa Mundo"), for which he is most celebrated nationally. The richness of local colour, lively dialogue and perceptive portrayal of character bear witness to his sense of humour, love of lan-

guage and above all, love of his country and people.

He was to receive many prestigious awards during his life, both national and international, but confessed that what he prized most of all was the affection and respect of his fellow countrymen who saw in his work a national pride together with a faithful account of their way of life, their language and their aspirations. But although his work is centred on Costa Rica it is universal in its sentiments.

His *Obras Completas* in five volumes were published in 1993 by the University of Costa Rica and the National University Press jointly, and are now in their second edition. A few months before his death, which was hastened by a struggle against emphysema, he was honoured publicly by what turned out to be a final official tribute by the State following the publication in English of his last novel - *Los Años Pequeños* (1989) under the title *Years like Brief Days* - by Peter Owen in association with Unesco. His surprise and joy were unbounded.

Joan Henry
Fabian Dobles, writer; born San Antonio de Belen, Costa Rica 17 January 1918; married Cecilia Trejos (five daughters); died 22 March 1997.



Dobles: rich local colour

Genuine British passport proves citizenship

Region v Secretary of State for the Home Department, ex parte Oka; Quigley Bench Division Crown Office List (Mr Justice Sedley) 18 April 1997

A person seeking to enter the United Kingdom discharged the burden of proving British citizenship, established by section 3(8) of the Immigration Act 1971, by producing a genuine passport describing him as a British citizen. There was no further burden upon the entrant to prove his identity.

The Queen's Bench Division quashed the determination of the Home Secretary that the applicant was an illegal entrant. The applicant had entered the United Kingdom on 13 July 1995, using a British passport issued to him on 19 May 1995 for a six-month period in the name of Chukwudi Oka. On 17 October 1995, when he applied for renewal of the passport, he was arrested and served with a notice directed to him as an illegal entrant.

Lectures
Tate Gallery: Kurt Paezel Lecture, Sam Suley, "Turner's Narrative: tales of mystery and imagination", 6.30pm.

British Museum: Dominic Montserrat, "Mummy Portraits: their uses and subsequent abuses", 6.30pm.

LAW REPORT

23 April 1997

Principal question to be decided was one of pure law: was it for the Home Secretary to satisfy the court that the applicant was an illegal entrant or for the applicant to satisfy the court that he was not?

While it had rightly been conceded that on the evidence, any onus which might rest on the Home Secretary could not be discharged, it was true of the applicant if in law the onus was on him. He had produced to the Passport Agency material sufficient to secure the lawful issue to him of a full British passport in the name of Chukwudi Oka, but there was some doubt that he was in fact Chukwudi Oka. He was on him to prove his identity in order to prove that he was not an illegal entrant. He had not discharged that burden on the balance of probability.

Everything turned, therefore, on where the burden of proof lay, but within that question was another: proof of what? The ultimate question was whether the applicant was or was not an illegal entrant.

Section 33(1) of the Immigration Act 1971 provided that an illegal entrant was a person who unlawfully entered, sought to enter or had entered the United Kingdom in breach of immigration laws. A person with the right of abode in the United Kingdom was not an illegal entrant. Section 3(8) of the 1971 Act provided that it was for a person asserting that he was a British citizen to prove that he was, and by section 3(9) a person claiming to have the right of abode should prove it by means of... (a) a United Kingdom passport describing him as a British citizen...

The applicant contended that he had satisfied both subsections (8) and (9). The Home Secretary accepted that the passport he had produced described Mr Oka as a British citizen, but contended that until the applicant had proved that he was Mr Oka, the passport did not come within subsection (9). He submitted that, once identity had been queried, it was up to the entrant to prove the further fact that he was

the Mr Oka described by the passport as a British citizen.

In the factual situation described, his Lordship had reached the conclusion that no such further burden rested upon an entrant. He remained open to all the sanctions of the law if it could be proved that he had secured the passport by fraud. Until that point was reached, however, the production of a genuine passport which described as a British citizen a person who was undoubtedly the person seeking to enter, discharged the burden of proof of British citizenship established by section 3(8).

Although the authorities cited to the court contained relevant pointers, the real answer to the question posed was in a straightforward reading and application of section 3(9) in its legal and historical context. Any other approach reduced the section to a shadow of Parliament's evident intention and placed the executive in almost unchallengeable command of a liberty which, section 3(8) apart, was in our law one of the individual's most prized protections.

Kate O'Hanlon, Barrister

Births, Marriages & Deaths

DEATHS

HARRISON W.L.S. (Leslie), on 19 April, of heart failure, Mercersville, Wadsworth, of Gwent (née Francis), father of Ruth and Hilary. Funeral private.

Announcements for Gazette BIRTHS, MARRIAGES & DEATHS (Births, Adoptions, Marriages, Deaths, Memorials, services, wedding announcements, in Memoriam) should be sent in writing to the Gazette Editor, The Independent, 1 Canada Square, Canary Wharf, London E14 3DL, telephone 0171-233 2912 or fax 0171-233 2910, and are charged at £6.50 a line (VAT extra). OTHER Gazette announcements must be submitted in writing (or faxed) and are charged at £10 a line (VAT extra). They should be accompanied by a day-time telephone number.

ROYAL ENGAGEMENTS

The Queen took the opportunity of a visit to the United States to announce the engagement of her daughter, Princess Diana, to Prince Charles, Prince of Wales. The wedding will take place on 29 July 1997 at St Paul's Cathedral, London. The bride will wear a gown designed by Elizabeth Arden. The groom will wear a tuxedo designed by John Galiano. The wedding will be broadcast on television and radio.

Changing of the Guard
The Household Cavalry Mounted Regiment will perform the Changing of the Guard at Horse Guards, London, on 23 April 1997. The ceremony will be broadcast on television and radio.

Birthdays

Mrs Shirley Temple Black, former child actress and US ambassador, 69; **Mr Michael Bowen**, Roman Catholic Archbishop of Southwark, 67; **Mr Bill Cotton**, chairman, Noel Gay Television, 69; **Mr Antony Graham**, television producer, 79; **Mr J.P. Donaghy**, author, 71; **Mr Barry Douglas**, concert pianist, 71; **Sir Desmond Downes**, automotive engineer, 75; **Mr Harold French**, actor, theatre and film director, 100; **Mr Leslie French**, actor, singer and director, 93; **Air Marshal Sir Timothy Garden**, Director, Royal Institute of International Affairs, 53; **The Hon Victoria Gledhill**, author, 60; **Mr William Hagerty**, former Editor, the *People*, 58; **Sir Arnold Hall**, former chairman, Hawker Siddeley Group, 82; **Sir Russell Hillhouse**, Permanent Under-Secretary, Scottish Office, 59; **Mr Kevin Jarvis**, cricketer, 44; **Mr James Kirkup**, author and playwright, 74; **Dr Richard Laws**, former Master, St Edmund's College, Cambridge, 71; **Mr Tony Miles**, chess player, 42; **Mr Ronald Neame**, film producer and director, 86; **Mr Mike Smith**, disc jockey, 42; **Professor George Steiner**, Extraordinary Fellow, Churchill College, Cambridge, 68; **Mr Ed Stewart**, former disc jockey, 56; **Sir Herbert Taylor**, actor, 89; **Miss Issa Wyatt**, actress, 49; **Sir Eric Yarrow**, former chairman, Clydesdale Bank, 77.

Anniversaries

Births: William Shakespeare, playwright and poet, 1564; Maarten Harpertzoon Tromp, naval commander, 1598; George, Baron Arden, admiral and explorer, 1697; Samuel

Wallis, navigator and discoverer of Wallis Island, 1728; Joseph Mallord William Turner, painter, 1775; James Buchanan, 15th US president, 1791; Maria Tagliioni, ballerina, 1804; Thomas Wright, historian and antiquary, 1810; Louis-Antoine Julien (Julien), conductor, 1812; James Anthony Froude, historian, 1818; Pierre Dupont, songwriter, 1821; Max Ludwig Planck, physicist, 1858; Dame Ethel Mary Smyth, composer, 1858; Frank Bourque, film director, 1933; Margaret Kennedy, novelist, 1896; Lester Bowles Pearson, statesman, 1897; Dame Edith Ngila Marsh, novelist, 1899; Vladimir Vladimirovich Nabokov, author and lepidopterist, 1899; Deaths: William Shakespeare, playwright and poet, 1616; Miguel de Cervantes Saavedra, author, 1616; Maurice of Nassau, Prince of Orange, 1625; Henry Vaughan ("The Silex"), poet, 1695; Thomas Tickle, poet, 1740; Christian Wilhelm Ernst Dietrich, painter, 1774; Joseph Nollekens, sculptor, 1823; Erik Gustaf Geijer, poet and historian, 1847; William Wordsworth, poet, 1850; Auguste Laurent, chemist, 1853; Friedrich Preller, landscape painter, 1878; Maria Tagliioni, ballerina, 1884; Karl Friedrich Wilhelm Ludwig, physiologist, 1894; Rupert Chawner Brooke, poet, 1913; Joseph Pennell, artist and author, 1926; Li-Car Percy Thomson Dean VC, killed at Zeebrugge 1918; Elisabeth Schumann, singer, 1952; Larry "Buster" Crabbe (Clarence London Crabbe), swimmer and actor, 1983; Kent Smith, actor, 1985; Harold Arlen (Hyman Arluck), composer, 1986; Otto Preminger, film director, 1986; Arthur Michael, Lord Ramsey, for-

mer Archbishop of Canterbury, 1988. On this day: King Brian Boru of Ireland beat back the Danes at the Battle of Clontarf, 1014; the Order of the Garter was founded by King Edward III, 1349; Connecticut was declared as an English colony, 1662; Warren Hastings was acquitted of high treason, 1795; Mischolung was captured by the Turks, 1826; plans for a Channel Tunnel were turned down by Queen Victoria and Emperor Napoleon III of France, 1867; Gilbert and Sullivan's opera *Pirates* was first produced, London 1881; the Battle of Zeebrugge ended, 1918; the British Empire Exhibition was opened at Wembley, 1924; the Shakespeare Memorial Theatre was allied at Stratford-on-Avon, 1932; Allied forces in Italy reached the river Po, 1945; the oil pipeline from Kirkuk to Basra was completed, 1952; the first helicopter in Britain was opened in London on Thames-side, 1959; the first decimal coins were issued in Britain (5p and 10p), but were used as one-shilling and two-shilling pieces until decimalisation, 1968; the republics of the Soviet Union were granted the right to secede under certain conditions, 1991. Today is St George's Day and the Feast Day of St Adalbert (Votable) of Prague, Saints Felix, Fortunatus and Achilleus, St Gerard of Toul and St Ibar.

Lectures
Tate Gallery: Kurt Paezel Lecture, Sam Suley, "Turner's Narrative: tales of mystery and imagination", 6.30pm.

British Museum: Dominic Montserrat, "Mummy Portraits: their uses and subsequent abuses", 6.30pm.

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French voters have Britain in their hands

Jacques Chirac is taking a great risk. By ordering the premature dissolution of the National Assembly, the French president is putting his authority on the line, along with the fate of the centre-right majority. He puts Europe at risk, too. Or rather, he may be jeopardising the "project" of monetary union and deeper institutional integration within the European Union. For during the election campaign, short as it is, a Gallic brand of Euro-scepticism (not to be confused with the offshore species) may seize its hour.

"Europe is peace," M Chirac said in his television address to the French people on Monday. But what if significant numbers of electors prefer war – war on the unemployment they may (wrongly) blame on preparation for the single currency, war on the cuts in social spending they (half-correctly) blame on the euro, war on the fishermen and beef-farmers of Britain and the freedom of trade which has allowed their produce into France? On present arithmetic the Gaullist-liberal majority in the assembly will lose seats but retain power. But what if – this is not a contradictory proposition – the elections result in an assembly in which European say-ers have the edge (for example if the National Front makes big gains or the Gaullists in the RPR stiffen their stance)?

In such circumstances, French participation in the Amsterdam intergovernmental conference in June becomes

problematic... a lamed president and an uncertain prime minister would be unlikely to offer strong leadership. In turn, German attitudes would be affected, for the French would surely be pressing to soften the Maastricht criteria and politicise the conduct of the European bank. And so on.

This then is an election to watch. Without France – meaning the assent of French people in the main – there can be no monetary union. Without France – meaning a French government confirmed in power – institutional reform within the European Union cannot happen. Thus on France and French electors depends the very opportunity for a British prime minister to display the macho attitudes espoused so ostentatiously in recent days by Messrs Major and Blair.

The constitutional power under which President Chirac has acted saw service in 1968 when Charles de Gaulle faced a crisis of state. M Chirac's position is hardly comparable. The Gaullist-liberal coalition has a handsome majority of seats which did not have to be vacated till next year – allowing more than enough time to enact the savings needed if France is to meet the Maastricht criteria. Dissolution now, as the socialist leader Lionel Jospin observed, looks suspiciously like a request for a blank cheque, not just to make spending cuts but to accept the euro on more or less Germany's terms. To that extent,

this will be a European election, a chance for the French people to revisit the territory they voted on in that close referendum in 1992.

Of course there are other factors in play, among them the corruption charges pending against a number of the President's henchmen (and in the case of the mayor of Paris, Jean Tiberi, their wives too). For many Frenchmen and women, Europe may bulk considerably less large than their resentment at unemployment or immigration. There is in France (as in Germany) a note of that fatalism about the European "project" – Jacques Santer,

president of the European Commission, was using the language of historical inevitability again the other day – which grates so on British ears. Yet it seems unlikely that Europe will not feature in this French election. A key figure is M Jospin. He resolutely opposes further "austerity" for the sake of meeting the Maastricht criteria. If he makes Europe the issue this contest can only be viewed – here in the United Kingdom – as most welcome.

Here is an opportunity to test the water, to consult, to seek to bring the costs and opportunities of closer union home to people. Europe cannot be

built by policy élites: that surely was the lesson of the Maastricht referendums five years ago. M Santer recognised the fact in his controversial speech, though he offered few thoughts on the remedy. M Jospin has spoken about offering a referendum – another means of securing the people's assent (or their rejection) of momentous actions taken by governments in their name.

Another reason for attending these elections closely is to learn something about the ideology of British Euro-scepticism. In France, M Jospin wants to make an issue of the Juppé government's economic liberalism by identifying the enemy of France as that "capitalisme dur" which the Anglo-Saxons have clasped to their bosoms and which he does not want to see built into the European Union. Thus his demand for an "economic government" to parallel the European Central Bank. M Jospin is being pushed to take an even tougher line on the euro by the Communists. But, inevitably, the anti-British banner will be waved most energetically by Jean-Marie Le Pen, whose latest *bon mot* is that the Holocaust was an "historical detail".

Across the Continent, intelligent Euro-scepticism is starting to be heard from the left-of-centre, for example in Germany from Gerhard Schröder, the prime minister of Lower Saxony. Atavistic, hard-nationalist Europhobia, a territory inhabited here by certain

Tory MPs and their one-time paymaster Sir James Goldsmith, is in France and Germany the prerogative of the far right.

The French election campaign will begin in earnest next month, leading to a first round of votes on 25 May. By then many British people will be panting: "enough elections!" But the contest is worth following. It is not much exaggeration to say that upon its outcome the fate of the next British government hangs.

A Union of debatable value

In all universities, student politics is at a low ebb. That is regrettable if it leads on to graduates avoiding engagement with civic life. But it is hard to see modern students regaining their interest in politics by taking part in full-fledged debating with proposers in black tie and all the rest. Debating is an anachronism which hangs on only in such places as the House of Commons and the Oxford and Cambridge Unions. Perhaps, without the latter, the former might be a better place. Given the qualities in office of so many of the politicians these Unions have bequeathed to the nation, it is hard to panic at the news that the Oxford Union is in financial difficulty.

LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

Critical battle for European aerospace

Sir: Michael Harrison's article (18 April) concerning British Aerospace Airbus's repayments of launch aid on the A320 raised the vexed question of subsidy and political support in civil aircraft manufacture and the dispute between the US and EU on this issue.

Europe's response to US dominance in the civil aeronautics field brought forth the Airbus consortium in the late Sixties. The consortium was the beneficiary of state aid, precisely because this was the only way that Europe could hope to compete with the giant American corporations which were the recipients of largesse from the Department of Defense and NASA. US supremacy in civil aeronautics arose because the civil industry was embedded in a massive research and development and manufacturing infrastructure created by Cold War military policy, which placed airpower at the centre of defence strategy.

The successful manufacturers were helped through lean times on the civil side by guaranteed military orders done on a cost-plus basis. At the same time, US provision of global security linked sales of both military and civil aircraft to continued American leadership of organisations such as Nato. After all, who in their right mind would have freely chosen to buy an aircraft such as the Lockheed Starfighter?

Bearing in mind these points we in Europe need to see US claims about the role of the market and free trade in civil aeronautics as a smoke screen. Further, dual-use technologies in aerospace, originally developed on the military side, may have a number of civil applications. For example, where did the Integrated Modular Avionics on the 777 come from? Europe needs to see aerospace more clearly as a strategic industry with important externalities to be considered in addition to simple models of profitability. Aerospace is a prime medium for systems integration across diverse leading-edge technologies. The industry is also a major source of export earnings for Europe. Aerospace jobs are highly skilled and add enormous value through the production stage.

Finally, aerospace is critical to Europe's security. It should not be assumed that the US will always back up Europe's air force capacity, or that US airpower will always be available when European interests are threatened.

Today in the US the aerospace defence and civil sectors move ever closer together, with benefit to both sides. Airbus's US rival Boeing has an enormous defence portfolio and is at the centre of a strategy to use aerospace high technology as a springboard for a new assertiveness in US trade policy. Europe needs to be aware that while the US talks free trade it is practising mercantilism. Professor PHILIP LAWRENCE Aerospace Research Group University of the West of England Bristol

Sir: A J Terry seeks an explanation for John Major's free vote mystery (letter, 21 April). Mr Major's impressive election broadcast was quite clear – the vote in Parliament will be on whether or not to endorse the Government's recommendation. Only if the Government backs entering the



Magpies found not guilty

Sir: The British Trust for Ornithology has not failed to address the possible link between the decline of many familiar songbirds and the increase in magpie numbers (Letters, 19 April). Our data, based on the work of tens of thousands of birdwatchers over many years, provide more detailed information than just the gross population trends.

We use our data both to investigate various potential causes of reductions in bird numbers and to focus more detailed studies on the most likely of them. So far, the evidence is that magpies, while they may affect the numbers of some other species on a local scale, are not responsible for the observed widespread declines of many other species. In contrast, there is extensive evidence that many species have been adversely affected by developments in farming practices. Modern farming appears to represent the greatest threat to birds in Western Europe today. This is a problem for society at large, which determines the policies and economic conditions under which farmers operate. Finding a solution will not be easy and will not be helped by blaming everything on one factor, be it magpies or anything else.

Should our work ever suggest that magpies are, indeed, responsible for reducing the populations of other birds, then we shall draw that conclusion clearly to the attention of those responsible for wildlife policy. It is not for BTO to campaign for culls but to urge that the management of the countryside is based on sound evidence, not prejudice. JEREMY D GREENWOOD British Trust for Ornithology, Theford, Norfolk

Sir: There seems to be only one way of reducing magpie numbers without harming other birds – the Larsen trap, invented in Denmark and more recently promoted by the Game Conservancy Trust at Fordingbridge – which will supply plants and essential components. My Larsen trap caught 78 magpies in two seasons (March to July). I dispatched them humanely with a high-powered air rifle.

Each trap requires a decoy bird, a live magpie, readily available at the beginning of the season from nearby farmers, and replaced by trapped birds to keep the captivity short. It needs to be fed and watered, of course.

The reduction in magpie numbers in my garden has been matched by the increase in the songbird population. I now shoot the rare visiting magpie, with a 12-bore high-energy cartridge and No 4 shot, from cover – they are wary birds. I am reluctant to kill them, but more reluctant to see them tearing songbird parents to pieces. PETER HILL Tanworth-in-Arden, Warwickshire

Gaelic voters

Sir: My sympathies to Stephen Goodwin ("Nationalists play for real in battle for Isles", 21 April), who felt "frozen out" by the quixotic decision of Anne Lorne Gillies, herself a Gaelic speaker, to talk to the voters of South Uist and Eriskay in their native language. Such signs of individuality should be stamped out wherever they are encountered – they'll be wanting their own country next. PENELOPE ROBINSON Sub-Dean University of Leeds

euro, and Parliament subsequently supports this, will there then be a referendum. Under these circumstances it is vital that MPs have a free vote. Otherwise, if both government and opposition support entry, any debate in Parliament will be a nonsense. On an issue so important, MPs must be given the freedom to argue their own case and to represent the views of their constituents – both in Parliament and on the doorsteps during a referendum campaign. Only then will this country get the serious debate it deserves.

During this election campaign we should be encouraging candidates to discuss the single currency openly with constituents; we need to know where our MP stands. It seems that Tony Blair wants only to stifle debate – by pillorying Tory MPs who speak their mind, and by making it clear that Labour MPs will be expected to follow the whip in any Commons vote. Democracy is best served by a free and open vote, whether in Parliament or in the country. MARCUS YOUNG Ely, Cambridgeshire

Sir: As a Spaniard living here for many years, I have of course been deeply depressed by the recent sight of super-patriotic bulldogs and German-baiting posters in the election campaign. There is, however, a very different Britain, which for us foreigners is far more important.

I recently went to the Victoria & Albert Museum to see once more what is for me the most beautiful object there – Nino Pisano's *Angel of the Annunciation*. Disappointed that it was badly lit, I went to the front desk, where a charming lady volunteer encouraged me to fill in a comments form. To my surprise and delight, I received within a week a personal letter back from the curator informing me that changes had been made in the lighting and hoping that they would meet with my approval on my next visit. I doubt whether any other museum in Europe would have paid any attention to my comments, let alone taken any action. This kind of personal attention is to us in Europe far more important than the jingoistic rhetoric of your politicians. LUIS CANIZARES Bedford

Purple and privileged Sir: Some have suspected it for a long time, New Labour is now to the right of the Tories. Purple, their new colour, is of royalty, privilege, that of the highest in rank, of moneyed cardinals and bishops. We know that New Labour is a "broad church" but surely not in this sense. It may be appropriate, however, for those who send their children to fee-paying schools. Red on the other hand stands for Old Labour virtues, the colour of magic, magnanimity and fortitude. Still a colour of privilege, adopted by humankind since Henry II declared fox-hunting a royal sport, it is red which is the colour of passion. Women's magazines agree that red is the colour of seduction,

intensity and adoration, the colour to bring about changes.

But purple may have been adopted as a subconscious linking with its classical use as the colour of death. Homer wrote, "purple death fell over him" – certainly Tony Blair's fate if Labour is defeated on 1 May. And in Italy it is still a most unlucky colour, one never worn by surgeons in the operating theatre.

Colour symbolism, particularly change of a colour symbol, is not to be undertaken lightly or by those not well versed in the subject. A piece of advice: forget purple. JOHN HUTCHINGS Colour and Appearance Consultant Bedford

Sir: The image of Tony Blair and Chancellor Kohl has an older history than you might think. The 12th-century historian William of Malmesbury records that in 1121 Pope Calixtus II ridiculed the antipope Gregory VIII, whose election had been engineered by the German Emperor Henry V, as "that puppet of the king of Germany".

Tories will be gratified to learn that the English commentator considered the jibe "an exquisite and refined piece of wit". As their fortunes continue to languish, they may also find comfort in the fate of the antipope, who was arrested by the church authorities and forced to end his days in a remote monastery pressed into service as an ecclesiastical high-security prison. ALAN MACCOLL St Leonards, Fife

Ignore IRA's bomb warnings

Sir: I would like to support Roy Jenkins' suggestion, which I heard on the television, that it is time we stopped taking responsibility for the outcome of IRA action.

In the last war, when train travel became unreliable, I bought a bicycle to travel the daily seven miles to work between Lee Green and Blackfriars. When notices notified unexploded bombs, we just walked carefully round them and continued on our way. The war certainly would have been lost if we'd waited for them to be cleared away. It is quite ridiculous to allow a few telephone calls to disrupt the whole business of any area.

The Government should first state that the IRA is entirely responsible for any destruction or casualties arising from IRA activities, then give warnings of telephone calls of possible danger and let ordinary citizens get on with whatever business they wish. I'm sure present-day workers have as much determination as their forebears not to be beaten into submission by an enemy. Mrs B M L PERRY Chesham, Essex

Byron's 'bulldog'

Sir: Anthony Thornton ("A softie, and no bull: Labour's choice wins a pat", 19 April), refers to Lord Byron's endorsement of the bulldog and quotes the poet's

epitaph to his pet dog Boatswain. Mr Thornton has got the right quote, but the wrong dog. Boatswain was a Newfoundland dog.

My reference book describes this breed as "originally brought from the country of which they bear the name, where their great strength and docility render them extremely useful to the seafarer". In contrast, "the Bull-Dog always makes his attack without barking; it is very dangerous to approach him alone, without the greatest precaution".

Who made the right choice, Lord Byron or New Labour? ANTHONY FENLEY Oxford

Sainted actors

Sir: If your correspondents (Letters, 19 and 21 April) are going to discuss such important matters as the number of actors who have portrayed Simon Templar, they (or you) should perhaps invest in some basic reference material, such as David Pringle's admirable *Imaginary People*.

This mentions films featuring Louis Hayward, George Sanders, Hugh Sinclair and Jean Marais (in French). There have also been radio dramatisations starring Brian Aherne, Vincent Price and Tom Conway (in the US) and Terence De Marney (in the UK). Add Moore and Ogilvy from the television, and now Val Kilmer on film, and this seems to add up to at least 11; as Pringle does not claim to be completely comprehensive, there may well be more. P J MASTERS Baldock, Hertfordshire

analysis

Activists, old and young, feel voiceless in the new political climate, but is that a reason for not voting? Paul Valley listens to two veterans

It is, more than ever before, the Election of the Disenfranchised. The Can't Be Bothered Party will, psephologists are predicting, make an unusually good showing this time. The turn-out at the poll, they speculate, will be poor.

In addition to the usual quota of the apathetic and disengaged, there are still those who removed themselves from the electoral register in poll tax days. Add to that those in what is pejoratively termed the "underclass", whose economic alienation spills over into the electoral sphere.

But this time there are also the radicals, those who no longer feel at home in a deracinated Labour Party, who feel that on a whole range of issues – increased taxation, law and order, the poverty gap, nuclear power, Trident and even the National Lottery – they have no vehicle for voicing their opposition to the main party consensus. Such radicalism exists at both ends of the age spectrum, as I discovered when I brought 26-year-old roads activist Jai Redman together with 87-year-old Spanish Civil War veteran Bill Alexander.

Despite the age gap there are striking parallels in their background, political formation, activism and disenchantment. Bill was born in 1910. The son of a rural carpenter, he was brought up in Hampshire by a mother whom he describes as "a free-thinker", though they were a poor family there was always a newspaper in the house. After passing the scholarship he progressed to Reading University, where he read chemistry. It was at the height of the Depression, and when the Welsh hunger marchers came through the town, Bill and his fellow students went down and listened.

After graduating he worked in a paper mill, where he joined the National Union of Printers, Bookbinders and Paperworkers and, at the age of 22, became a member of the Communist Party.

Jai was born six decades later just down the road in Southampton. After an upbringing in the "sterile environment" of a new housing estate with parents who "aspired to middle-class consumer comfort", he also went to university in Reading, to read Fine Art. But it was politics rather than his chosen subject which fired him too. "There was no real politics on the campus: just the old groups. The Tories were the biggest, opposed by the Socialist Workers' Party." But then came animal rights protests and campaigns against student loans and the poll tax. "It taught me the importance of individual action, of people taking control of their lives."

The defining moment for Jai came with the plan to cut a motorway through Twyford Down. "I had passed it every weekend as a child on the way



Can the Newbury bypass campaigners (left) draw any lessons from the fight against fascism in Spain (right)?



to my grandparents and I had always thought that this totally circular hill was something romantic, other-worldly, magical." He got on the next train for the protest camp, switching from sculpture to photography to document the fight against the road.

Bill Alexander's righteousness was roused by something which was more immediately menacing – fascism. "The essence of fascism is that there

are superior nations, races and religions and that the superior can use power to maintain that position." Bill heard of the persecution of Jews, communists and trade unionists – and feared for the same thing in Britain if Oswald Mosley and his Blackshirts triumphed. "We all turned out to stop him at the Battle of Cable Street. But when in Spain the people stood up to stem the tide, I decided the natural thing for me was to go and help stop it there before it reached my home and my family."

He fought for 18 months, becoming a Commander in the British Battalion of the International Brigade, before he was wounded and invalided out.

"Franco was backed by an experienced Italian army fresh from its war in Abyssinia and by the full might of Germany, which wanted to practise its blitzkrieg and dive-bombing techniques. The Republicans had no supply of arms and the British government pursued a policy of 'non-intervention', which meant we could not supply the arms. Bravery and conviction will take you a long way, but in the end

the bomb and the bullet will win out. So all the time we were doing what we could to influence public opinion back here to change the Government's non-intervention policy. We sent postcards home and wrote to local papers hammering away and saying: 'For God's sake, change the policy.'

"There was also a big movement to collect money and medical aid. The aim was to carry public opinion. That was the big lesson we learned in Spain, and have followed ever since. You've got to combine what you do with winning more people to your point of view. That's what we did when we came home."

It was a lesson which Jai and his contemporaries had absorbed from the start of their direct action. "Public opinion has always been the be-all and end-all to us. You can stage direct confrontations but in the end you have to make your point to the general population. All we can do is be an example to other people to say to them: 'This tide of tarmac and

destruction goes no further than us. But you have to come in behind us." We never felt that as a group of 20 or 30 people in a field we could affect the thing decisively. But if we were in the papers and on TV we could perhaps make a difference."

Bill's battles were at Jarama, Brunete, Aragon, Teruel, Seguro and de los Baños. Jai's were at Twyford Down, Jesmond Dene, Salisbury Hill, the M11 and the Newbury by-pass. At the end of the day, of course, in each case they failed.

"I disagree," says Bill. "In Spain we were defeated after three years, but the world learned from the resistance that fascism was not invincible or inevitable. So when the Second World War began more people were ready. We weren't defeated, we just went to fight on a different front. That's a comfort for you, Jai: you may not win every time, but you can lose the first round yet win the war."

"You can't say people like Bill lost when there are people like me fighting today," Jai responds. "Bill is absolutely right. It is about telling people

that the enemy can be defeated. Environmental destruction is not inevitable. Multinational corporate fascism – with its cultural cleansing, its chemical waste, pollution, violence and the Armani suit it wears instead of jackboots – is not invincible. Individual bypasses may go through, but we believe we are winning the war and making people realise that building more and more roads is a Sixties attitude to infrastructure which offers no long-term solution. I really believe that in the future people will look back and say 'They were right' and be pleased that there were people prepared to make sacrifices – not heroics or martyrdom like Bill's generation – but sacrifices for a better future."

To such an agenda the forthcoming general election is, he insists, largely irrelevant. Bill agrees, and sees the problem in terms of method as much as modern electoral style. "When I came out of the Army I stood as a Communist in 1945 in Coventry East against Dick Crossman. I went round in a clapped-out Austin Seven speaking to the people – on the streets, in the cafes, at the factory gates."

That approach was partly dictated by lack of finances, but also by ideology: it was important to get to the people so that dialogue could be two-way.

"Today there is no attempt to do that," Bill laments. "There are large numbers of the unemployed, homeless, the low-paid and the poor. But there is no attempt to canvass their views."

Their agenda would not sit easily with the TV soundbites. Mention of such things might frighten off the legendary Middle England voter.

New Labour's strategy to concentrate all its efforts on the

views of key voters in a handful of marginal seats is, Bill believes, wrong "politically and morally". He explains: "If the aim is only to get a parliamentary majority, regardless of what you have to do to achieve it, sooner or later you'll come up against the opposition, indignation and anger of parents, patients, trade unionists, environmentalists." If the main political parties persist with such a strategy – and if New Labour continues its attempt to stultify any questioning minority with an atmosphere of dictatorship and conformity – Bill believes that politics will take on a new form with single-issues direct action, like that of Jai, as the new norm.

The young activist agrees. "Politics is defined by people. All these disenfranchised groups – that's where the real politics is, not with hollow figures wrestling with each other for power and a Prime Minister who looks like an alternative comedian impersonating a prime minister."

This is why the imperatives of real politics have so little interface with the election agenda. "Look what is happening in Central Africa today," says Bill. "Who in this election campaign has mentioned that?" He lists the other issues which have gone missing from this Marie Celeste of British politics – the increasing poverty gap, the insecurity of those in work as well as the frustration of those without it, transport issues, pensions, genetically engineered food, and sustainable development in what he calls "the majority world" in which two-thirds of the globe's population exists in serious insufficiency.

There is, responds Jai, no politics on the street now – "It all comes out of The Box." That is why he did not bother to vote last time and why he will not vote on 1 May.

Bill is unhappy at the suggestion. "I can't bring myself to canvass for Labour, as I always have in the past. I have very little heart for what's happening in the new Labour Party." But he will vote, for the lesser of evils.

"In struggle you've got to go step by step," he says, addressing Jai directly. "The old radicalism was built over generations – building trade unions, the Tolpuddle Martyrs, the formation of the Labour Party. It took years to assemble. History has never been a straight upward curve, it's all ups and downs; after 17 years of Thatcherite individualism we have a lot to rebuild. So the first thing is to get Labour elected, and the next is to press for change within New Labour. Absenteeism doesn't recognise that struggle is a step-by-step process."

Jai looks momentarily chastened by the authority of age and experience. "I don't know whether my landlord has registered me," he says. "If so I may vote Green, or I may go in and spoil my paper. What we need is a box to tick which says 'None of the Above'. But I will vote if I can. You've shamed me into it."

The old radical laughs at the young one. *La lucha continua*. The fight goes on.

The reluctant radicals

WE'VE ADDED A LITTLE EXTRA INTEREST TO BONUS GOLD.

Halifax is happy to announce increased interest rates (which include the bonus) for its Halifax Bonus Gold accounts from 1st May 1997. The bonus will now be 1.00% gross p.a. (0.80% net p.a.). All other interest rates on savings accounts remain unchanged. Full details of all other Halifax savings accounts are available at any Halifax branch.

The rates shown apply to both the deposit and share account versions of this product.

	UK rates			Non-Resident rates			Non-Resident rates		
	GROSS PA %	GROSS C.A.R. %	NET PA %	GROSS PA %	GROSS C.A.R. %	NET PA %	GROSS PA %	GROSS C.A.R. %	NET PA %
BONUS GOLD (including Bonus)									
£10,000	6.50	-	4.96	6.05	-	4.61	-	-	-
£20,000	6.50	-	4.96	6.05	-	4.61	-	-	-
£50,000	6.50	-	4.96	6.05	-	4.61	-	-	-
£100,000	6.50	-	4.96	6.05	-	4.61	-	-	-
Months Interest Option (including Bonus)									
£10,000	6.00	6.20	4.46	5.94	6.06	4.36	4.63	-	-
£20,000	6.00	6.20	4.46	5.94	6.06	4.36	4.63	-	-
£50,000	6.00	6.20	4.46	5.94	6.06	4.36	4.63	-	-
£100,000	6.00	6.20	4.46	5.94	6.06	4.36	4.63	-	-

Points to note: Interest rate includes a special annual bonus of 1% gross a year (0.80% net a year) calculated on the balance at the end of each day. This is paid if no withdrawals are made apart from (1) interest and bonus credited to the account on or after 1st April 1997; and (2) withdrawals of up to £5,000 each month if you have had your Bonus Gold account for two years or more. Please remember that you must keep at least £10,000 in your account and must not close it during the 12 months before your anniversary of account opening to qualify for the bonus. Withdrawals without loss of interest (apart from the bonus) if we receive no direct written notice. One withdrawal of up to £5,000 each month without loss of interest (apart from the bonus) if we keep £10,000 in your account; if you have had your account for at least 2 years with withdrawals can be made without losing the bonus (as long as the account is not closed before the next bonus is due). Minimum opening deposit of £10,000. Interest will be paid net after the lower rate of income tax (currently 20%) has been deducted unless you have completed a registration form and made a declaration to comply with Inland Revenue regulations. The net rates shown, which are only examples and have been rounded, assume the lower rate of income tax is taken (currently 20%). Compound annual rates (C.A.R.) apply when full interest is received on the new account balance. If your account balance is less than £10,000 you will not receive any interest unless you appear on our records as being under 21. Special rate of interest paid to customers who appear on our records as being under 21 at the above listed rate or special rate (whichever higher) on balances in the account. All interest rates quoted may change. Full account conditions and details of when interest is paid are available from any Halifax branch.



23rd April 1997

'Ask the Voter', the new political phone-in

Today we have something totally new in the election. Not another dreary phone-in programme with a politician giving guarded answers, but a chance for politicians to put their questions to the ordinary voter! In the studio we have an ordinary voter. At the other end of the line we have leading politicians of the day dying to put their questions to an ordinary voter. And the first call is from...? Clarke: Kenneth Clarke. Voter: And what is your question, Mr Clarke? Clarke: I just want to put it to you that as, under the Tory stewardship, this country's economy is now booming... Voter: Excuse me one moment. This is not a question you are asking. This is the usual political trick of disguising propaganda as a question. If you have a question to ask the voter, ask it. If not, get off the line. Clarke: Point taken. May I first ask what kind of voter you are? A party faithful? A floating voter? A first-time voter? Voter: I am a last-time voter. Clarke: Good heavens. May I ask you to expand on that?

Voter: I am not particularly old, so I do not expect this to be my last election. But I do expect it to be the last time I vote if I feel my vote is wasted. Clarke: And how do you feel your vote would be wasted? Voter: I feel that it is only at election time that politicians pay any attention to the voter. For five years in between elections we are ignored. Suddenly, at election time, we are courted, like a bank manager agreeing an overdraft. Then we are ignored again. There have been plain signs in the polls for two years now that we are sick to death of your government, but you paid no attention. You never admitted to being unpopular – at most you said it was mid-term blues, or that your message was not getting through. What you should have done was go to the country then. Clarke: You think a government should call an election every time it is down in the polls? Voter: No. But nor do I think that the right people to decide on a vote of confidence are the parliamentary majority. Do you, Mr Clarke?



Miles Kingdon

Clarke: I am here to ask questions, not answer them. You said so yourself. Voter: Next, please! Howard: Michael Howard. Given that the level of crime has now gone down for five years in a row... Voter: Next, please! Dorrell: Stephen Dorrell. Voter: Next, please! Blair: Tony Blair. Before I come to my question, may I ask why you refused to listen to Dorrell and Howard? Voter: To give them a tiny touch of their own medicine.

And your question, Mr Blair? Blair: My question is this. Given that the government of the country is in the hands of tired, clapped-out and corrupt politicians, is it not time for a change? Voter: To put it into the hands of inexperienced, idealistic innocents? Blair: No, I am not talking about the Liberal Democrats. I am talking about Labour. Voter: Nice try. But do not the Liberal Democrats have more recent experience of governing, at least at local level, than Labour? Blair: All right, I will rephrase the question. Come 1 May, will you please please please please vote Labour? Voter: No. Blair: Why not? Voter: Because Labour is lying a bad third in my constituency and I would rather vote Lib Dem to get the Tory MP out. Because in this country we tend to vote against people rather than for them, and I shall be voting against Tory, not for Labour. Blair: Even if it means putting Labour in? Voter: Yes. We don't trust Labour any more than the Tories, but we haven't had a

good chance to mistrust you yet. Because politics, if it is anything, is a soap opera, and the British public are dying to see what would happen in the next episode if Labour were put in power. Ashdown: Paddy Ashdown here. Then why in heaven's name did you vote the Tories back in at the last election? Voter: Because we are voters, and voters are not very clever people. Was it not H.L. Mencken who said, "Democracy is the theory that the common people know what they want and deserve to get it good and hard?" Ashdown: Was he American? Voter: Yes. Ashdown: Then his remarks are not relevant, are they? Voter: No. Whatever else the Americans' faults, they do at least think big. Even when they are complaining they think big. Americans worry about the budget deficit and the national debt to Japan. We worry about VAT on heating and the price of prescriptions. The British electorate is petty and deserves petty politicians. It gets them good and hard. Ashdown: Yes, but... Voter: Sorry, time's up.

Are we becoming co-operatives?



Hamish McRae

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Are we really becoming less co-operative?

Co-operation. It is a nice word – the idea that people do things together, helping each other and thereby improving the lives of everyone. So different from competition, suggesting a fight for supremacy. You never hear of “cut-throat co-operation”, do you?

But co-operation, as far as UK economic endeavour is concerned, is in rapid retreat. You can see that retreat this week in the battle for the Co-operative Wholesale Society, the sprawling business conglomerate that runs the Co-op supermarkets, the bank and (an inspiration for countless bad jokes) the funeral parlours. A young entrepreneur called Andrew Regan is trying to launch a £1.2bn bid for the group. This has led to accusations of industrial espionage, payments to companies in the Cayman Islands, threats to call in the Serious Fraud Office and other excitements.

The bid may or may not succeed – it looks a bit flaky to me – but it would not be credible at all were it not for the Co-op's poor record. The bank does well, having cleverly used its non-mainstream status to attract customers sensitive to ethical issues. In the Fifties the Co-op completely dominated the retail grocery trade, now it occupies a small corner. Maybe the bid will succeed and the Co-op will face sudden death; even if it fails, the alternative looks more like death by a thousand cuts.

But it is not just in the Co-op itself that the co-operative dream is fading. Building societies are co-operatives, founded so that people could save for their own homes, and in saving, help others to buy them. Yet in the space of 10 years almost that whole sector will have changed to shareholder control. Just this week Alliance & Leicester shares hit the stock market. Abbey National converted some years ago; the Halifax (the largest of all) and the Woolwich are about to follow.

Even that other group of mutually-owned financial institutions, the life assurance companies, is now beginning to abandon co-operative status. It is not a bad rule to judge people on what they do rather than what they say. At the height of 19th-century capitalism people were busy forming co-operative institutions – they deliberately rejected the stock market as a form of ownership in favour of self-help. Now, at a time when it has become fashionable to criticise the supposedly harsh values of the stock market, and praise the “stakeholder” virtues of co-operation, exactly the opposite is happening. Institutions which have taken 100 years or more to build up in co-operative form are being converted to shareholder ownership, because people are voting for it. Meanwhile, no significant new co-operatives are being formed.

That last point is surely the killer. The commercial world is extraordinarily fluid. You would expect companies to rise and fall, to change their shape and their ownership. But you would also expect similar activity among new enterprises. Yet while there are enormous numbers of new

businesses being created, there does not seem to be the same energy in the co-operative sector. Why not?

There are several possible reasons. One is that the commercial sector, spurred by competition, has lifted its game. The Co-op stores are finding it tough because Tesco and Sainsbury are much better than they were 25 years ago, and they are better because the lidless eyes of the financial markets are driving them to be better. One or (in the case of the life assurance groups) two centuries ago, people needed new co-operative ventures because the quality of the commercial alternatives was at best uneven, and at worst dreadful. Now any new consumer desire will quickly be spotted and met.

That leads to a second change: the need for professional, specialised, driven management. It was a fairly straightforward business running a retail group or a financial institution two or three generations ago, and it was not difficult to attract quality management. Now management has become intensely specialised, and organisations without clear ownership seem to find it difficult to attract and retain these skills. Good people who might start co-ops seem to prefer to start their own businesses instead.

There is a practical example of the failure of co-operative management in the famed Meriden co-op which, backed by the then Labour government, took over Triumph motorcycles. It collapsed. But now, as *The Independent* reported last Saturday, the business has revived under a single, gifted owner and is successfully pushing back the frontiers of Japanese domination at the top of the market.

A rather different reason may be the growth of the state since the Second World War. The self-help ethos which founded the 19th-century institutions grew up in a period when there was no presumption that it was the job of government to take responsibility for encouraging home ownership or pension provision. So co-ops happened because if they didn't, nothing got done. Now it may still not get done, but there is a state to blame.

Will this change? I think it may. The idea of the co-operative is too good, too long-established, too attractive a concept to disappear for ever. There are small-scale co-op enterprises being founded now that never hit the headlines. A tiny number may grow into substantial businesses. They will be helped by other structural changes taking place in the economy: the ability of the Internet to link like-minded people together; the fall in the unit size needed to be successful in a business; maybe even the spur of the retreat of the state.

But if the movement is to revive, it will have to do so from the bottom up. It will happen because people want to co-operate, not because they are told to by some politician. What government can perhaps do is to remove roadblocks. Somewhere out there, maybe some future Co-operative Society is being created. We just haven't heard of it.

Hamish McRae

How do we nurture the values of the Co-op in a free market?

Cry ‘God for Tony Blair, England and The Sun’

Europe or the tabloid, which will the Labour leader betray? His nationalistic tirade panders to Euro-sceptic prejudice and undermines our best interests, argues Andrew Marr

“On the day we remember the legend that St George slayed a dragon to protect England, some will argue that there is another dragon to be slayed: Europe.

There is a weasel phrase there – “some will argue” – but in tone it is indistinguishable from anything by John Redwood, Norman Tebbit, Bill Cash or Michael Portillo. In the relentlessly nationalistic tirade that follows, the author promises to slay any European federalist dragon, so that England can be strong, building a Europe “on Britain's terms”. It comes from an article in yesterday's *Sun* and the author was Tony Blair.

It goes much further than “reclaiming the enemy's tunes”. The impression given is the fashionable one that Europe is all threat. Nowhere was there a mitigating word of praise, however faint, for the European Union.

That, I suppose, would be “inappropriate” for the audience of *Sun* readers. Blair has often sounded more pro-European, but when speaking to different audiences. One message for one group of readers on Europe, another for another. Does this ring any bells?

Alarm bells, obviously – but there's also a faint chime reverberating over the years. I remember, in particular, a Conservative Party conference.

In a seaside hotel, I bumped into one of the most pro-European Tory MPs in the party, and then later had a drink with a fiercely Euro-sceptic right-winger from the “No Turning Back” group. Coincidentally, both had seen the same rising, little-known minister that day and both were impressed.

Why? Because he had given both of them the impression that he agreed 100 per cent with their views. He was then Chief Secretary to the Treasury, and his name was John Major.

Today, Tony Blair is Chief Secretary to the Treasury, and his name is John Major. Blair's weak leadership, his failures of party management, and the whole country knows what he means. But how did Major come to seem weak?

It was because he thought the best way of dealing with a divided party was to tell the different factions that, deep down, he was on their side. He was agreeable to the bastards. That was why they became disruptive bastards. He was winningly pally and reassuring with the pro-Europeans. That is why they feel betrayed.

By failing to make his own views sufficiently clear, the Prime Minister thus made it inevitable that he would have to take special account of whichever Tory faction won the struggle for hearts and minds. You may say that the argument about nationality and power was good for the country as a whole, however damaging it was for the Tory party. But in brief, that is the short story of how Major the leader became Major the follower.

No one is suggesting that the Labour Party today is in anything like the same state as the Tories were when Major became leader.



Wrapped in the flag: Tony Blair and his dragon-slaying message to ‘Sun’ readers yesterday

‘Tomorrow is St George's Day, the day when the English celebrate the pride we have in our nation.’

‘I will have no truck with a European superstate. If there are moves to create that dragon I will slay it.’

The great difference is that most of Blair's Euro-sceptics are ageing and ideologically fixated, removed from the Blair project; whereas the Tory Euro-sceptics are often young, including many new candidates, and are close to the ideological heart of their party.

With Labour's “people, change” slogan, Blair's people, during their long years in the wilderness, were heartened by the social programme of the EU. Quite a few of them served in the Strasbourg parliament, as MEPs or aides. And anyway, they don't tend to have the rhinoceros-faced angst about national destiny that is ingrained in every proper Tory.

But if Blair can ignore, at least for the time being, the likelihood of a serious party split on Europe, there is the rather larger question of the direction of the country. Yesterday's press conferences by Labour and the Conservatives confirmed a general impression of a desperate “more-sceptic-than-thou” competition – a headlong flight away from Europe.

Doubtless this was fuelled by messages from target voters. This week, soft Labour voters and soft Tory voters are thought to be winning by the party which offers most nationalistic-patriotic reassurance. Apart from the Liberal Democrats, no one has the courage to stand against the tide and speak up for what used to be thought plain common sense. Kenneth Clarke is obliged to fume

about the single currency and see the need for some clear and final definition of the “ever-closer union”. We understand the fear of being politically swamped, and the need for vibrant national and local democracy. Where true radicals differ from the Euro-sceptics is that we don't only want to defend national politics; we want to make British democracy really worth defending, by taking it away from the hands of focus group organisers and late-night cabals in the whips' offices of the House of Commons.

“Europe” cannot be separated from these domestic concerns: flinch from Europe and you start retreating back from reform into nostalgic, flag-waving *Gormenghast* politics. It's no coincidence that the fiercest British enemies of the EU have been those on the right who uncritically and unhistorically worship Westminster

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Seven out of ten in the UK die without a Will

Few people expect to pass away in the near future – most of us have every expectation of going on for years. Perhaps this is the reason seven out of ten people in this country die without ever making a Will.

There are other reasons of course. Will making is often thought to be time-consuming and complicated – this is not always the case. Sometimes there are issues which are difficult to discuss with family members.

Others assume that, even without a Will, when they die, their wife or husband will automatically inherit all their money and possessions.

Not true.

Making a Will – and keeping it up to date – is essential to safeguard your loved ones.

If you are married, your property may not necessarily pass in its entirety to your husband or wife, unless you make a Will leaving him or her everything.

If you are unmarried, none of your property will pass to your surviving partner unless you make a Will.

If you die without leaving a Will, the law provides that certain relatives, including brothers, sisters, parents, cousins, aunts and uncles might be entitled to your estate. It leaves a horrible mess – at a time when the people you leave behind, and hoped to be able to support, are least able to cope.

When you marry, any Will you made previously may become null and void. If you

divorce, any provision made for your previous spouse is cancelled. The birth of a child or a death in the family could mean you should amend an existing Will. A significant increase or reduction in the value of your personal assets could require an amendment to any existing Will. If you die without leaving a Will and you have no relatives, your entire estate will go to the government.

Making a Will – and keeping it up to date – is absolutely vital if you want to ensure that the needs of your loved ones are catered for in the event of your death.

Have you made a Will? Is your Will up to date?

WWF have published a free guide to Will making which outlines, clearly, the issues you need to bear in mind when preparing a Will and explains some of the more confusing jargon associated with Wills and bequests.

It also describes how you can go about making a bequest to charity – in particular WWF-UK.

Remember, having an out-of-date Will is little better than having no Will at all. This free booklet is essential reading if you care about your family and friends – it's also important for your own peace of mind.

So, send for your free guide today, which you can request by calling 01488 426445 or writing to Sally Burrows, Legacies Officer, WWF-UK, FREEPOST, Rand House, Godalming, Surrey GU7 1BR. Please also remember to quote reference IN26.

Why I will vote for the Lib Dems

Two conditions characterise this general election: the poverty and deprivation in which a growing number of children, families and single men and women live; and the laws to which both Conservative and Labour parties are committed, which, in the scope and implications, surpass even the emergency powers of the national government during the Second World War.

As *The Economist* has said: “The legal powers of the British government now extend far beyond what other established democracies consider tolerable... public officials have been granted breathtakingly wide powers.”

These powers are: the Criminal Justice Act, the Criminal Procedures and Investigations Act, the Crime (Sentences) Act, the Asylum and Immigration Acts and the Police Act.

During this general election the prison minister, Ann Widdecombe, has banned Emma Nicholson, the Liberal Democrat MP, from returning to Campfield House, a notorious detention centre for asylum seekers, and from visiting any detention centre, immigration centre or prison service establishment, including Dartmoor in her own constituency. Ms Nicholson is opposition spokesman for prison-related subjects and for human rights, and the Liberal Democrats are committed to opposition and repeal of the Asylum and Immigration Acts.

All my life, I've voted Labour. The history of the Labour Party still moves my instincts to vote Labour. But the Labour Party has ceased to exist. With the passing of the Police Bill, UK citizens

and asylum seekers have lost all the civil/human rights fundamental to democracy, with the exception of trial by jury. The Labour Party supports all this legislation. Labour further promises to reduce the statutory age by which a child can be tried on criminal charges. Both parties are committed to locking up into secure training units (to be managed by Group 4 Security) youngsters who have committed three offences.

The European Court of Human Rights has found the British government in breach of its convention 43 times, more than any other government. Never have so many human rights organisations, charities, law-firms, solicitors, church commissions and even government-appointed commissioners protested and reported so emphatically against the conditions and the laws passed since the last election.

The Conservative Party proclaims “Britain is booming”. On 6 April the *Sunday Times* named 1977 a “Vintage Year for Wealth”.

Facts and figures tell the other side of this story: child poverty and malnutrition; loss of health and homes; unemployed youngsters; desperate conditions for pensioners, the disabled and the mentally ill; women committed for offences involving poverty; deaths in police cells; imprisonment and criminalisation of those seeking refuge from war, famine and dictatorship.

The Eurostar Labour Force survey shows 20.6 per cent of households with children in the UK have no wage-earners, the highest percentage in the EU



by Vanessa Redgrave

All my life I have voted Labour. But that Labour Party has ceased to exist

(France, 8.8 per cent, Germany, 8.4 per cent). Research for the 1997 report *The Hunger Within* shows that 2.3 million schoolchildren (four to 19 years old) please note, Mr Blair's families on income support are deprived. Figures for Family Credit show 1.3 million more children are only marginally better off.

There is no national screening programme for malnutrition, so children under four cannot even be reached. Calcium, vitamin D and iron deficiencies have brought back TB and rickets.

There is a causal connection between poverty and deprivation, “soaring asset values”, and the laws that have deprived UK citizens of their fundamental rights. I can tell it simply with the story of the British-Asian Hillingdon Hospital workers. Six months after the hospital contracted out cleaning services to Pall Mall, these women were cut with loss of sick pay. There was nothing they or their trade union could do within the law, to prevent other workers being employed at Hillingdon at lower wages and/or as part-time workers.

The Criminal Justice Act together with the Police Act make “aggravated trespass” out of peaceful pickets, and marches or demonstrations into criminal offences. There is a new definition of serious crime: “conduct by a large number of persons in pursuit of a common cause”.

There is to be a National Crime Squad (NCS Service Authority) and a National Criminal Intelligence Service. Citizens can be bugged in their homes, their offices or their solicitors' offices,

and their documents purloined. They have no right of appeal, and the judiciary are deprived of their powers to control or authorise such activities.

It is for these reasons that the Charter for Basic Rights was started. I am proud to campaign for this charter, along with Harold Pinter, Edward Bond, Helena Kennedy QC and Gareth Peirce, the courageous solicitor, among others. The charter is not a political party – we will continue to campaign for repeal of all the Acts of Parliament already mentioned, along with the anti-trade union laws, and the Prevention of Terrorism Act. We call for unconditional all-party talks for an end to the war in Northern Ireland and for the release of political prisoners on both sides, as happened in the Middle East peace accord.

I shall vote Liberal Democrat in the constituency where I live, because of their opposition to the Asylum and Immigration Acts and the Criminal Justice Act, which in my view are the cornerstones of the present police state powers. Oskar Schindler and Varian Fry, the two anti-Nazis who saved the lives of Jews and false documents to escape the Gestapo, would be criminals today in Britain.

I do not consider a vote for the Liberal Democrats as “lost”, nor should it be renounced for tactical reasons. In the coming months we all need every Schindler and Fry there is, in or outside the EU.

The Charter for Basic Rights is at 112 Upper Tooting Road, London SW17 7EN.

business & city

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Scandal-ridden Nomura says 'sayonara' to its entire board



Michael Harrison

The president of the scandal-ridden Japanese securities house, Nomura, resigned yesterday along with the rest of the 16-strong board in the most dramatic and sweeping resignation ever witnessed by Japan's financial community.

Massumi Suzuki, who only took up the post a month ago following the forced departure of his predecessor, said he too had to accept responsibility for the racketeering scandal that has wrecked the reputation of Japan's biggest securities firm. "Nomura is ex-

periencing the worst crisis since it was founded," Mr Suzuki said darkly as he announced his resignation.

The scandal broke two months ago after it emerged that Nomura had been paying sums into accounts linked with a racketeering organisation, collectively known as *sokaiya*, to avoid its annual shareholders' meeting being disrupted.

Yesterday Nomura's former president disclosed that it had paid more than ¥70m in stocks into accounts linked with the racketeer. Testifying before a committee of Japan's Upper House of Parliament, Hideo Sakamaki, who stepped down last month, said investigators had discovered five irregular stock deals through which the money was routed, one of which involved the transfer of shares in a commercial bank.

Meanwhile, there were Japanese press reports yesterday that the Ministry of Finance will suspend some of Nomura's operations, including the ability to deal in shares on its own account, for three months as punishment. The developing scandal has already prompted the de-

Japanese bank backs £1.5bn Regan Co-op bid

Nigel Cope and Chris Hughes

The battle for control of the Co-op took a fresh turn yesterday when it emerged that Nomura International, the Japanese bank, had agreed to fully underwrite £1.5bn of debt funding to back Andrew Regan's audacious break-up bid.

News of the funding came as the Co-operative Wholesale Society carried out its threat of contacting the Serious Fraud Office regarding a £2m payment made by Mr Regan to a Cayman Islands company two years ago.

As accusations flew regarding a continued surveillance operation including phone tapping, the filming of private meetings and taping of key personnel one industry commentator said: "The Co-op is now in play. If Andrew Regan doesn't get it, someone else will. It is a pretty obvious target."

Mr Regan's bid plan, which is being conducted through an offshoot of his quoted vehicle Lanica Trust, would be worth around £1.5bn in total. This would include a £1,000 payment to the 500,000 members of the Co-operative Wholesale Society. It would also include a one-off £10m payment to the Co-operative Union, the CWS administrative centre, to use for funding "good causes".

Nomura was putting the finishing touches to its financing deal last Friday when it heard of the High Court injunction

banning the use of confidential documents. The bank said yesterday it did not have any such information in its possession. It is thought Nomura is keen to go ahead if the injunction is lifted at a court hearing on Friday.

CWS representatives visited the SFO yesterday regarding a £2m payment made by Hobson, a food company that was formerly controlled by Regan, to a Cayman Islands middle man. The payment was made to Ronald Zimet in return for negotiating an extension to a supply agreement between Hobson and the CWS. The CWS contacted the SFO after assurances from Mr Regan failed to satisfy the Co-op's legal advisers.

In a letter explaining the payment to Graham Melmoth, chief executive of the CWS, Mr Regan said: "Ronald Zimet of Trellis International acted on

behalf of Hobson in assisting with and conducting negotiations with the CWS concerning some weeks before the extension [to supply the CWS] was finally agreed. Hobson had not succeeded in negotiating an extension without assistance. Hobson took the view that to help avoid jeopardising its position with the CWS by further efforts to work without assistance, it could usefully involve Mr Zimet."

Regarding the involvement of Allan Green, the CWS retailing controller who was suspended last week, Mr Regan said: "Mr Green attended at least one meeting with Mr Zimet at which I was present. The meeting took place on 11 January 1995." Mr Green has said the negotiations were held direct with Mr Regan and denies any knowledge of Trellis or Mr Zimet.

Mr Regan closes by saying he was given legal advice that it was not necessary to disclose the payment to the CWS.

In a caustic response, Mr Melmoth said: "The facts are these: On 19 January [1995] you were still negotiating directly with Mr Green. The deal was done on 24 January, the documents were signed on 25 January and the payments were made on 26 January. Mr Zimet got his instructions from you late on 19 January. Then miraculously, only three days later, Mr Zimet announces that he has overcome the intractable negotiating problem you say you

faced. The deal was done within hours and you pay him £2.4m. I find that extraordinary."

In a separate development yesterday, the Regan camp won an extension to the deadline requiring it to file affidavits in the High Court detailing what confidential information it had obtained on the CWS and the use to which it would be put. The initial deadline was set for 4pm yesterday. However after a brief hearing in court Justice Timothy Lloyd granted an extension to 10am today. The CWS opposed the extension.

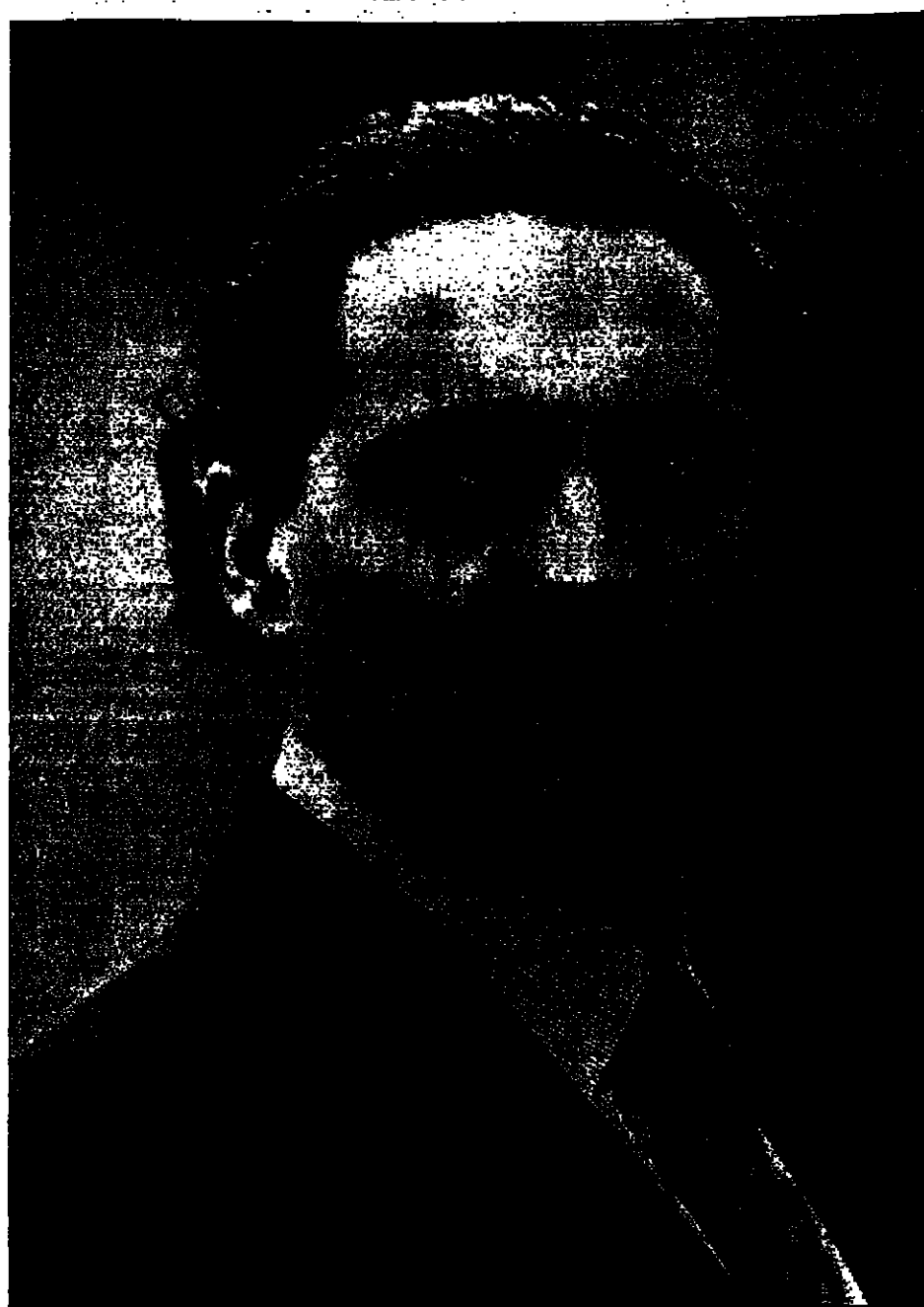
Mr Regan's counsel said the extension was required to complete and check work undertaken to comply with the order.

The CWS yesterday denied it still had a surveillance operation on the Regan camp. It repeated that it had called off security experts, Control Risks, last Friday.

Mr Regan still has to satisfy the Bank of England's strict criteria on bank ownership in order to buy the whole of the CWS, including the Co-operative Bank. Under the Banking Act it is required that all parties who have even a 10 per cent controlling interest in a bank must be passed "fit and proper". Even though Mr Regan would effectively be warehousing the bank before selling it on he would still have to pass this test.

However, the Bank of England is required to have solid grounds for a refusal.

Comment, page 23



Bid plan: Mr Regan's strategy would include a £1,000 payment to the 500,000 CWS members and a one-off £10m payment to Co-operative Union, the CWS administrative centre, to fund 'good causes'

Labour holds no fears for DFS

Terry Macalister

Sir Graham Kirkham, whose family is one of the biggest financial backers of the Conservative Party, yesterday gave a qualified thumbs-up to Labour. He believed his DFS Furniture business would prosper whichever government was in power.

Sir Graham, accused last year by Labour's deputy leader, John Prescott, of "buying" a knighthood with donations to the Tories, said he had no fear of discrimination under Labour.

The DFS boss, who became a multi-millionaire after leaving school with no O-levels, said: "I have never met John Prescott but I don't think it [what he said] was personal."

Announcing the latest set of DFS interim results, Sir Graham revealed that his senior management believed retailers prospered more under Labour governments. Sir Graham said he supported the Conservatives but explained: "We have traded under both [Labour and Conservative] and we have to maximise our profits under both."

Sir Graham believed the introduction of a minimum wage by Labour would not affect his business. Jon Massey, chief operating officer at DFS, downplayed any potential impact from Labour adopting the European Union's Social Chapter. He said any such legislation would affect all companies in Britain equally and not disadvantage just DFS.

There have been no corporate donations from DFS to the Tories. But there was a loan of £4m from Sir Graham's son, whose wealth was created by the Doncaster-based sofa business.

The company reported a 24 per cent increase in pre-tax profits to £18.7m while sales soared 44 per cent to £126.3m. The figures were buoyed by the opening of stores. Like-for-like sales from comparable stores were up 3.3 per cent.

Investment column, page 24

British businessman who has interests around the world

Ronald Zimet, the businessman who received a £2m "negotiation fee" from Andrew Regan in 1995, has a web of business interests across the world, writes Nigel Cope.

Though he is described as British his address is listed as Tel Aviv and he was understood to be in Israel yesterday.

Aged 51, he is a director of Investment Management and Finance, an asset management company based in Geneva, a non-executive director of Luventech, an industrial venture capital company based in Israel, and a director of Wrapco, a Dutch company. Trellis International, the company to

which the payment from Mr Regan was made, is registered in the Cayman Islands.

His one UK directorship is as non-executive chairman of Freepages, a provider of telephone information services which is listed on the Alternative Investment Market. The company came to the

market in February 1996 through a £30m reverse takeover of Blagg, the building materials group. Priced at 12p the shares have almost quadrupled and Freepages is now worth £220m. Mr Zimet is one of the largest individual shareholders with a 15 per cent stake worth £33m.

Owen Oyston, the Blackpool entrepreneur who was convicted of rape last year, used to have a near 10 per cent stake in Blagg and a small holding in Freepages. However, the company says he no longer appears on the shareholder register.

No one at Freepages' Oxfordshire offices was able to supply any additional information on Mr Zimet yesterday. The company's public relations advisers also had no details beyond a brief biographical statement.

However, it is expected that he will soon give his version of events that led to the £2m payment in return for helping to negotiate an extension to a contract between the CWS and Hobson, Mr Regan's former food company.

Halifax float nears completion as trading set to start in June

Nic Ciccotti

Halifax Building Society yesterday moved into the final furling of its lengthy flotation process as it announced that trading in its shares will begin on Monday 1 June.

More than 8 million individual members of the society will receive letters over the next two weeks telling them how many free shares they stand to receive, with those eligible in line for a minimum of 200 shares worth an estimated £900.

Members will be sent detailed instructions outlining how they should claim their shares and the choices they have for keeping or selling them.

Mike Blackburn, the society's chief executive, urged prospective shareholders to fill in the forms needed to claim their shares and send them back: "We cannot allocate free shares to any member until we receive their claim form confirming that they are entitled to [them]."

Analysts yesterday suggested that in the wake of the surge in the price of Alliance & Leicester shares on Monday, well above estimates a few months ago, Halifax shares could easily rise above earlier predictions.

The extent to which this might happen would depend on the availability of shares at flotation, with low numbers of sellers potentially forcing prices up.

Kathryn Newton, banking analyst at UBS, the Swiss banking group, said: "The value of Halifax shares will depend a lot on the auction process. If there were fewer 'carpetbaggers' [more likely to sell quickly], that could put prices up."

But she added that Halifax shares might equally trade far closer to their fundamental value, depending on the number of people indicating that they wish to offload their free entitlement immediately.

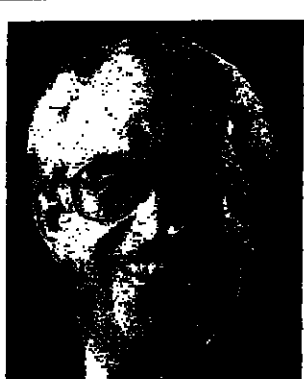
Unlike A&L's flotation, Merrill Lynch and Cazenove, joint brokers for Halifax, will set a public price below which no share will be sold.

The mechanism for selling the

shares will differ from A&L's three-stage auction. The book-building process will take place once, on the Friday prior to flotation, and once a day thereafter for as long as necessary.

Next week, Halifax aims to publish the minimum price it expects its shares to be sold at. Earlier estimates by the society have ranged from 30p to 450p. In the run-up to conversion, the society will invite institutional investors to make bids for parcels of shares. The prices then paid to members will represent the weighted average of the price bid by the institutions.

A spokeswoman said: "We believe that selling shares in this way ensures all members are



Mike Blackburn: Reminding members to claim shares

treated fairly and equally and receive the best price available at the time their shares are sold."

Halifax said yesterday it would attempt to obtain at least the minimum price, which it will publish on Monday, on behalf of a member selling his or her shares. If that amount is not available on conversion, the shares will not be sold.

Alliance shares retreat but auction price rises

Clifford German

The price of Alliance & Leicester shares fell 23.3p to 533p yesterday, but the average price paid in the second auction of unwanted shares on Monday rose to 531p, up 23p on the price in the first auction last Friday.

After the first two auctions the running average price received was 536p, with the result of the final auction, which took place last night, to come.

The top bid in the second auction was 575p, and the lowest 534p, but unlike the first auction when only 36 bids were received there were 147 separate bids – the largest for 8.5 million shares at 568p.

Cazenove, broker to the share issue, declined to reveal whether lower bids were received but did confirm that all the 52.3 million shares in the second auction were sold.

The 640,000 investors who decided to sell their shares at auction will know this morning the average of all three auction prices which will determine the price they receive.

The result of the third auction will give the new bank a clearer idea of whether any significant stakes have been accumulated, which could indicate the early presence of a potential bidder.

Although institutions were free to make multiple bids at dif-

ferent prices at auction, there is no clear evidence that the shares sold so far have fallen into the hands of a single determined buyer.

Excluding the 52 million shares from the auction, the number of A&L shares traded yesterday fell to around 7 million, although this included many thousands of small deals.

The experience of Alliance & Leicester will be closely studied by Halifax, Northern Rock, Woolwich, and the insurer Norwich Union, which have yet to decide whether to follow suit and allow small shareholders to pre-sell allocations when they float on the stock market later this year.

Comment, page 25

STOCK MARKETS				
Index	Close	Day's change	Change (%)	1996/97 High
FTSE 100	4346.10	+17.40	+0.4	4444.30
FTSE 250	4513.30	-3.90	-0.1	4729.40
FTSE 350	2138.00	+6.30	+0.3	2194.30
FTSE SmallCap	2298.65	+5.67	+0.2	2374.20
FTSE All-Share	2104.58	+5.67	+0.3	2183.84
Dow Jones	6750.11	+99.00	+1.5	7095.18
Nikkei	18544.45	-7.21	-0.0	19446.00
Hong Kong	12580.85	-49.19	-0.4	13888.24
Frankfurt	3340.33	-7.25	-0.2	3480.50

INTEREST RATES				
Short sterling	UK medium gilt	US long bond	3 Month	6 Month
2.75	5.50	6.50	5.50	5.50
2.75	5.50	6.50	5.50	5.50
2.75	5.50	6.50	5.50	5.50
2.75	5.50	6.50	5.50	5.50

CURRENCIES				
Index	Close	Day's change	Change (%)	1996/97 High
£/\$	1.6368	+0.0020	+0.12	1.6113
£/¥	1.6380	+0.0020	+0.12	1.6113
DM/\$	2.8009	+1.8007	+2.28	2.2816
DM/£	2.0658	+1.321	+1.61	1.6152
DM/¥	100.1	+0.5	+0.5	83.8

United wins power contract in Argentina

United Utilities has won its first large overseas electricity privatisation contract, the North West-based group announced yesterday, as part of a consortium to operate power supplies in Buenos Aires in Argentina, writes Chris Godsmark.

The consortium is paying \$404m (£252m) to take over one of three power companies in Buenos Aires for a concession lasting 95 years. United Utilities has a 45 per cent stake in the consortium, alongside Camuzzi, an Italian gas distribution company and Loma Negra, Argentina's biggest cement producer.

Kohl puts tax reform deficit f

German economic out-

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COMMENT

This payment is not a sideshow. It is symbolic of what this break-up bid is all about. It is not right that the CWS riches should be plundered for the benefit of a small group of asset stripping insiders'

The City will not profit from backing Regan

Andrew Regan's attempts to launch a takeover bid for the Cooperative Wholesale Society have gone far enough. Hambros, Schroders and other top drawer City backers for this avaricious endeavour would be well advised to withdraw their support now before it is too late. Already they have done themselves not insignificant reputational harm by lending their names to this attempted act of piracy. If they might reasonably have failed to anticipate the extent of public distaste for what they are doing, they must by now be very aware of it. To persist would be to play fast and loose with their good names.

This is a disreputable enterprise pursued for disreputable purposes. It may be thought common enough for City folk to earn £2.4m for three days work (though if the truth be known it is actually extremely uncommon even within the confines of the Square Mile), but nobody is going to believe outside the world of high finance that lottery style winnings like this can be legitimately earned. Graham McInnoch, the Co-op's chief executive, speaks the language of the ordinary man in his letter expressing incredulity at Mr Regan's explanation for this payment.

The matter is not, as the Regan camp would like us to believe, a sideshow and a distraction from the wider debate over the Co-op's future. It goes to the heart of matter and it is indicative of why so many people feel such a strong sense of revulsion for this escapade. The legitimacy or otherwise

of the payment is beside the point, though Mr Regan's explanation of it does bear a quite uncanny similarity to the explanation given by Ernest Saunders of his payment of £5.2m to Tom Ward in the Guinness affair.

The Guinness payment was found to be an illegal payment and there is no suggestion of that here. However, then as now the justification advanced was for invaluable advice and assistance in a commercial endeavour. Then as now the overriding question is how anyone, however brilliant and accomplished, could possibly be worth such staggeringly large amounts of money for so little work. It makes "excess" in executive pay look positively reasonable.

No, this payment is not a sideshow. It is symbolic of what this break-up bid is all about. The CWS has no doubt been a very poorly run company for a very long time. But it contains within it assets and reserves built up over generations through honest toil and endeavour. It is not right that such riches should be so easily plundered for the benefit of such a small group of asset stripping insiders. A mill here, a mill there for a few hours easy work - such will be the division of spoils if the Trellis payment is anything to go by. Don't let him do it.

Privatisation issues do funny things to investors but building society flotations, where it really is a case of money for nothing, provoke even odder behaviour. Yesterday among the cascade of bargains being done in Alliance & Leicester stock were a smattering of trades involving fewer than 50 shares and one that involved just eight. Even at £5.66 a share that is hardly worth getting out of bed and going down to the local share shop for.

Much better to have ticked the box saying you want your windfall in green folding stuff now and let Cazenove get on with it.

The sharp rise in the A & L's share price in first day dealings gave the fleeting impression that those who held onto their 250 free shares would do rather better than those who chose to take part in the great Caz auction. Yesterday's equally sharp drop in the price suggests otherwise.

Unless the last of the three share auctions has gone terribly wrong then those who sold out look like having done so at pretty much the market price. A smart investor might have made a killing by selling in the market on Monday but even then it would have been mighty small - £70 at most, after dealing costs, on a windfall worth more than £1,300.

The interesting question is whether the A&L's experience, where 27 per cent of shareholders opted to sell immediately, will set the trend for all the other societies taking the demutualisation route this summer. There is already a frisson in the air. The Halifax, the daddy of them all with 8.5m members against the A&L's 2.3m, is writing to all qualifying customers warning them that

they will lose their chance to benefit from the issue altogether if their forms are not in by 26 May.

Based on the A&L experience, there seems little incentive to do anything other than take the money and run. The theory was that prices would inevitably rise under the law of supply and demand. Since the big pension funds and other investment institutions would need to buy to adjust their weightings, there would be heavy demand for the shares. Thus far this doesn't seem to be happening, or if it is there is not much effect on the share price.

It is in the nature of financial markets, politicians and commentators alike to get so tangled up in minutiae that they lose sight of the broader picture. The budget deficit trees are once again obscuring the Emu wood. The obsession with whether or not various countries' 1997 government deficits will be just below or just above 3 per cent, the magic Maastricht number, is distracting attention from the important question, which is whether or not the single currency will work.

The targets for economic convergence, which include the 3 per cent deficit ceiling, were deliberately set out with some flexibility. It would be madness to pin a country's chances of joining the single currency on the bogus precision of one year's figures. Nothing in the economy is that precise.

A budget deficit is the difference between two extremely large and variable numbers, tax revenues and government spending. Taking it as a ratio of GDP means dividing it by a third very large number which will, with certainty, be revised substantially as the months go by. There is no essential difference between 2.9 per cent and 3.2 per cent in this case.

And though the markets ebbs and flow to the tiniest movements in these numbers, the big economic picture has not changed. The core countries, France and Germany, are struggling to get their economies into shape for a sustainable monetary union. They can manage it if they really want to. The political will to do so on the part of their governments remains.

What has changed, perhaps, is the degree of political opposition to the necessary economic medicine within both France and Germany. This is why President Chirac wants early elections and why Chancellor Kohl might struggle to get tax reforms through parliament.

When Britain underwent a combination of fiscal retrenchment and structural economic reform in the 1980s, there were violent strikes and regular inner city riots. A government has to be sure about where it wants to end up to set off down this path. This debate is what the fretting about tiny differences in deficit forecasts is really about - the degree of pain between here and 1 January 1999.

go in takeovers. It seems likely that a partner will be brought in to Zenith so it can be bought off."

But speculation about Saatchi & Saatchi and Bates as takeover targets was brushed aside by Mr Soelert. He said: "Frankly we do not see it that way. Both are robust companies that are perfectly capable of standing on their own."

Young & Rubicam, one of the US advertising groups linked by analysts as a possible future partner for Zenith, ruled itself out of the running yesterday.

Kohl pushes for tax reforms to cut deficit for EMU

Diane Coyle
Economics Editor

The German government remained confident yesterday that it could reduce its budget deficit by enough to qualify for the single European currency, despite the prospect that talks on tax reform plans with opposition politicians due today would break down.

The political manoeuvres came as the country's six leading economic institutes urged the government to clarify its tax and spending plans, predicting Germany would just miss the 2 per cent limit without further moves.

"Uncertainty about achieving the Maastricht criteria and doubts about the consistencies of fiscal policies have in fact led to misunderstandings that have considerably burdened the economic climate," the report said.

Theo Waigel, the Finance Minister, reacted by saying: "The government will do everything necessary to reach this target. Decisions would be taken after the latest figures for tax receipts in mid-May, he said."

The economic institutes have cut their forecast for growth this year to 2.25 per cent from 2.5 per cent previously, mainly due to higher-than-expected unemployment. They continue to expect a pick-up later in this year but see little sign of a reduction in joblessness until 1998.

Their forecast for unemployment in 1997, at 4.26 million, is about 80,000 higher than the government's own prediction. This alone accounts for an extra DM2bn (£700m) in public



Taxing times: The SPD could hold up Kohl's reforms

spending. The institutes reckon the government budget deficit will be between 3 and 3.2 per cent of GDP this year, the decisive year for qualifying for the single currency at its launch in 1999. The government's own forecast is of a 2.9 per cent deficit.

Predictions from the European Commission today are expected to share the government's view that it will scrape under the ceiling, but separate forecasts from the International Monetary Fund will be more critical about the lack of

progress on deficit reduction in Germany, France and Italy.

Chancellor Kohl plans to introduce a tax reform this summer, cutting income taxes by DM450m, but financing this and raising additional revenues through higher taxes on spending. The cabinet approved the plan yesterday, but the opposition SPD could hold up the tax reform in the upper house of the parliament.

Yet other economists shared the government's underlying confidence. "It is technically still possible to meet the 3 per cent target. The question is what policies will be adopted," said Holger Fahrnkug, at investment bank UBS in Frankfurt.

Chris Golden at Nomura in London said the government had enough scope to meet the target, but doing so by raising taxes would be problematic. "It would be ridiculous to rule out EMU on the basis of being 0.2 per cent outside the target."

German economic outlook			
	1996	1997	1998
Growth %	2.4	2.25	2.15
Inflation %	2.1	2.0	1.75
Unemployed '000s	3,965	4,260	4,150
Unemployment rate %	10.3	11.2	10.9
Govt deficit % of GDP	3.8	3.2	2.9

Cordiant may opt for Zenith poison pill

Terry Macalister

Cordiant, the advertising group which announced a three-way split of its operations on Monday, has admitted it might place pre-emption rights over shares in its Zenith Media Worldwide subsidiary.

Bob Soelert, Cordiant's chief executive, said no decision had been taken about pre-emption rights which could be used as a "poison pill" defence against predators.

Cordiant's position on the is-

sue would be outlined in the demerger prospectus which would be launched ahead of a special shareholder meeting in October, said Mr Soelert.

The company is looking for a partner for Zenith. However, if no partner is found then, under current proposals, Zenith will be owned equally by Cordiant's other two businesses that are being demerged - the Saatchi & Saatchi advertising agency and the Bates marketing group.

Zenith has offices in 22 countries but is considered too small

to compete in the media buying sector, a business that entails an agency buying advertising space for clients.

Regardless of any poison pill, some industry experts question how attractive Zenith would be to a buyer. One said: "Zenith is interesting because of the accounts it holds. But what would stop those accounts moving back to its former parent company in the event of a takeover?"

The Cordiant demerger, which could formally take effect in December with the stock list-

ing of Saatchi & Saatchi and Bates in both London and New York, has put all three groupings into play as potential takeover targets.

One rival media services group said it would certainly take a look at the individual businesses. A senior executive said: "Everyone in the industry will be putting the [acquisition] slide rule over all these new companies."

Lorna Tibbitt, media analyst with Panmure Gordon, said: "Both [Saatchi and Bates] could

go in takeovers. It seems likely that a partner will be brought in to Zenith so it can be bought off."

But speculation about Saatchi & Saatchi and Bates as takeover targets was brushed aside by Mr Soelert. He said: "Frankly we do not see it that way. Both are robust companies that are perfectly capable of standing on their own."

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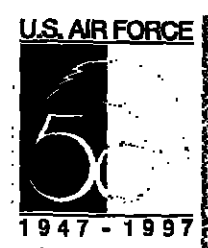
Following their initial attempt at flying around the world in a balloon, Bertrand Piccard and Wim Verstraeten will lift off again early next year aboard the BREITLING ORBITER 2, an all-new and even larger roziere-type balloon with a slightly modified capsule.

CHRONO JETSTREAM

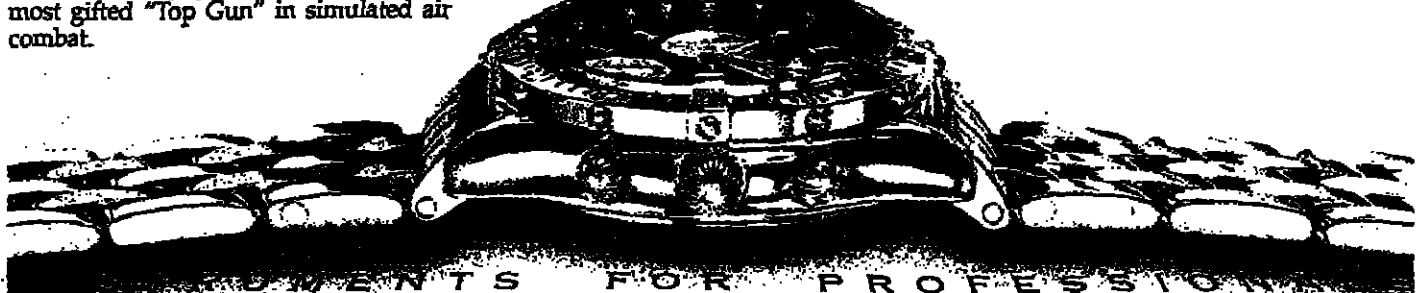


TWINSIXTY

A mechanical chronograph that displays the total minute count in two different ways ranks as a world first. The TWINSIXTY's new Caliber 39 movement shows the chronograph minutes either by a standard watch hand rotating around the dial (selective readings) or with the hours on a subdial (global readings). Water-resistant to 30m (about 100 ft), this new NAVITIMER design also shows time military style (24-hr cycle).



With 1997 definitely a banner year for aeronautics, BREITLING will be on hand for the USAF's 50th anniversary celebrations, not least at the International Air Tattoo at Fairford, in the U.K., on July 19 and 20.



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Direct approach benefits St Ives

THE INVESTMENT COLUMN

EDITED BY MAGNUS GRIMOND

St Ives, the printing group, believes in managing its businesses, rather than doing endless deals, which is a bit surprising since its chairman, Miles Emley, is a former deal-maker at the Rothschild merchant bank. By sticking to its last, the group has built market-leading positions in printing markets ranging from Bibles to the sleeves for CD-Rom discs by running a tight and well-invested ship.

That formula continued to deliver the goods in the latest half year to January when profits jumped by a fifth to £23.5m, more than the group made in the whole of 1992. The figures were muddled by exchange factors and a £1.08m maiden contribution from Perlmutter, the US direct response and commercial printer acquired in September, but underlying growth was still probably into double figures.

As ever, some of St Ives' cylinders fired better than others. Books was a flat market, with Bible exports hit by the strong pound and paperbacks showing little sign that the end of the net book agreement is boosting sales. Work printing the reams of documentation associated with City bids and deals has also gone quiet in the run-up to the general election, even if St Ives did pick up the massive Halifax Building Society conversion and the British Gas demerger. It is warning that the hiatus could continue for a while after May.

However, the cuts in pagination and delayed launch of titles which hit last year's results from the magazines division have reversed in the wake of the 20 per cent cut in paper prices over the past year. The Christmas decision by RR Donnelley of the US to close its York plant, one of the top five or six magazine printers in the UK, also brought a windfall in the shape of contracts for *Vogue*, *Top Gear* and in-house mags for Marks & Spencer and Sainsbury's Homebase. The troublesome new presses at the Caprioli works are now nearly fixed – some two years after the first was commissioned.

But the real growth areas, where St Ives is concentrating its sales efforts, are in direct response, multimedia such as CD-Roms and so-called international corporate finance. It also continues actively to look abroad to extend all its interests. Perlmutter, picked up last year in the US, and Jöhler Druck of Germany, in for a full six months this time after its acquisition in 1995, are both in direct marketing. The former seems to be dovetailing well with St Ives' Florida operation, while plans to increase capacity by up to 12.5 per cent in Jöhler is indicative of the health of the German company and its markets.

Prodigious cash flow, equivalent to after-tax profits in the half year, should leave the company with net cash at the year-end. Profits of £47.5m would put the shares, up 3.5p to 545p, on a

forward multiple of 17. Booming consumer expenditure looks set to make up for thinner times in financial markets, but Mr Emley may need to work up another foreign deal to get the shares on the move again.

DFS depends on new stores

There is only one problem with DFS Furniture according to Sir Graham Kirkham, the founder and executive chairman of this retailing phenomenon: it is too good to be true. Like all good jokes, this one carries the germ of truth within it.

Yesterday's interim figures to January, showing pre-tax profits up 24 per cent to £18.7m, were as excellent as Sir Graham believed and higher than City expectations. But most of the increase in sales, which soared 44 per cent to £126m, was propelled by new stores. Like-for-like growth through comparable stores grew by a meagre 3.3 per cent and Sir Graham said he had seen no sign of any great upturn in overall consumer spending.

This underlying figure may prove a cause for concern, especially with consumers almost certain to face higher interest rates immediately after the general election. But DFS is determined to protect itself by increasing its store openings in the South-east of the country.

It has created a Greater London bridgehead with three stores in New Malden, Sidcup and Croydon. It will supplement those by opening in Milton Keynes in August and Reading in October.

DFS had promised to open 15 to 20 stores in the three years from April 1995. It is now saying it will almost certainly exceed this figure.

Sir Graham insists that he operates a well-sprung machine that is built to withstand any prevailing commercial environment.

"DFS has never relied on a buoyant economy or a housing boom for its growth. Our success comes from winning sales, which soared 44 per cent to £126m, was propelled by new stores.

Like-for-like growth through comparable stores grew by a meagre 3.3 per cent and Sir Graham said he had seen no sign of any great upturn in overall consumer spending.

dends, such as the 10p a share paid last year.

Sir Graham is not ruling out further payments, even if the interim has been lifted a chunky 26 per cent to 3.9p.

Graville Davies, the stockbroker, are pencilling in profits of £38m for this year. That would put the shares, up 17p to 549.5p, on a forward multiple of 23, which looks high enough for Doncaster's finest furniture retailer.

McCarthy & Stone a good bet

McCarthy & Stone, the specialist builder of retirement homes, has had a long climb back from the low point of 1991-92 when the group lost £20m and the shares hit 18p.

They are still a long way short of the glory days of 1987, when the shares were nudging 600p, but pre-tax profits in the six months to the end of February have tripled to £6m. Even after stripping out one-off exceptional profits on disposals, the operating profit more than doubled to £2.5m.

The group sold 443 one or two-bed flats in the latest six-month period, 24 per cent more than at the same stage a year ago, and average selling prices rose by 8 per cent.

The stock of finished flats also rose from 945 in February last year to 1,200 a year later, but that is seen as a strong point ahead of the peak selling season in spring and summer, when two-thirds of sales take place.

It leaves the group well placed to cope with the increasingly visible recovery in the housing market, which will make it easier for retired couples to sell their family homes at a satisfactory price and move into specialised accommodation.

A modest rise in interest rates is no real threat because most buyers will not need a new mortgage, while it should help the company which currently has £5m in the bank.

The biggest problem is planning permission, but the group prides itself on its high success rate in reversing refusals at the appeal stage. Equally, the business should be largely election-proof since most local authorities are already either Labour or Liberal.

Reservations in the past few months are 35 per cent up on a year ago, and the medium-term prospects look good. Analysts have upped their forecasts for the year to September from £13.5m to £15.5m, excluding exceptional gains of £1.5m, or a clean 9p of earnings, and from £17m to £19m or 10.9p of earnings in 1997-98.

The shares rose 9.5p to 129p yesterday, putting them on a forward p/e of 12. One of the safer bets in the current market.

Continental bonuses on the menu at Warburg

PEOPLE & BUSINESS

The heat is on for Allan Thistleton, a young chef who does the in-house catering for SBC Warburg. Allan has been selected as one of six finalists for the annual Roux Diners Club Scholarship. If he wins the "cook-off" next month he will win three months' training at a Michelin three-star restaurant of his choice on the Continent, plus all sorts of other goodies.

Allan works for Sutcliffe Catering, who in turn do the grub for SBC Warburg. So what do the bankers think of young Allan's efforts? "I think the standard's excellent," said one culinary insider yesterday. "Sometimes the menus are a bit indecipherable, because they use so many French words to describe comparatively simple food."

"The general standard of international cooking has definitely improved since the old days of SG Warburg, with its old English food," the banker adds, controversially.

Does Andrew Regan of Lancia Trust wear eye liner? I only ask because an esteemed female colleague of mine is convinced he does, having seen numerous pictures of the young entrepreneur in recent days. A spokeswoman for the Regan camp firmly denies that Mr Regan wears any such eye adornment. "It would worry me if he did," she says. "He must have dark eyelashes where you would normally wear eye liner." Hmm. Perhaps we should get some private detectives on to this...

Ken Bates' Chelsea Village has bought the title and back catalogue of *Football Monthly* for an "undisclosed but modest sum". It's all part of Chelsea's ambitious plans for a media empire, explains Alan Shaw, Chelsea Village's company secretary.

"It will join our TV station, radio station and Internet coverage," says Mr Shaw. The magazine has been going since the Sixties at least, he says, and they've hired its current editor Paul Hawksbee from IPC Magazines where he was editor-in-chief of their five footy titles.

Mr Shaw is at pains to point out that Chelsea Village is a quite separate business from the club. The new stand at Stamford Bridge will be open in time for the new season, and there will also be a new shop, a hotel and 38 flats.

This independence is important, since Mr Shaw says Mr Hawksbee will have free rein to criticise whoever he chooses in print – including Chelsea.

There's another potential conflict of interest. Mr Hawksbee is – horror of horrors – a lifelong Spurs fan. Again Mr Shaw is unfazed. "It'll be interesting to see if he slags off Spurs."

We've had Electoral Rolls from Tesco (Blue and Red etc). Now the Royal Motor Industry Federation has produced research showing that red cars are bought by Labour supporters and blue cars by Tory voters.

"This is definitive proof that people's loyalty to political parties is deeply rooted in their subconscious," says the Federation. For instance, in Tory held Kensington and



Creating a stir: The Roux brothers' scholarship could benefit bankers' lunches

Chelsea there are 9 per cent more blue cars than red, a pattern which is reversed in the safe Labour seat of Barnsley East and Mexborough, which has 6 per cent more red cars.

Turning to the marginal seat of Stevenage, there are only 3 per cent more red cars, the narrowest margin of the three constituencies which the Federation studied. If Labour win it the Federation says this will prove their theory.

More worrying news for Mr Major is that sales of new cars in Stevenage were 42 per cent down last year on 1989's high. The "feel good" factor obviously isn't overwhelming Stevenage's car salesman.

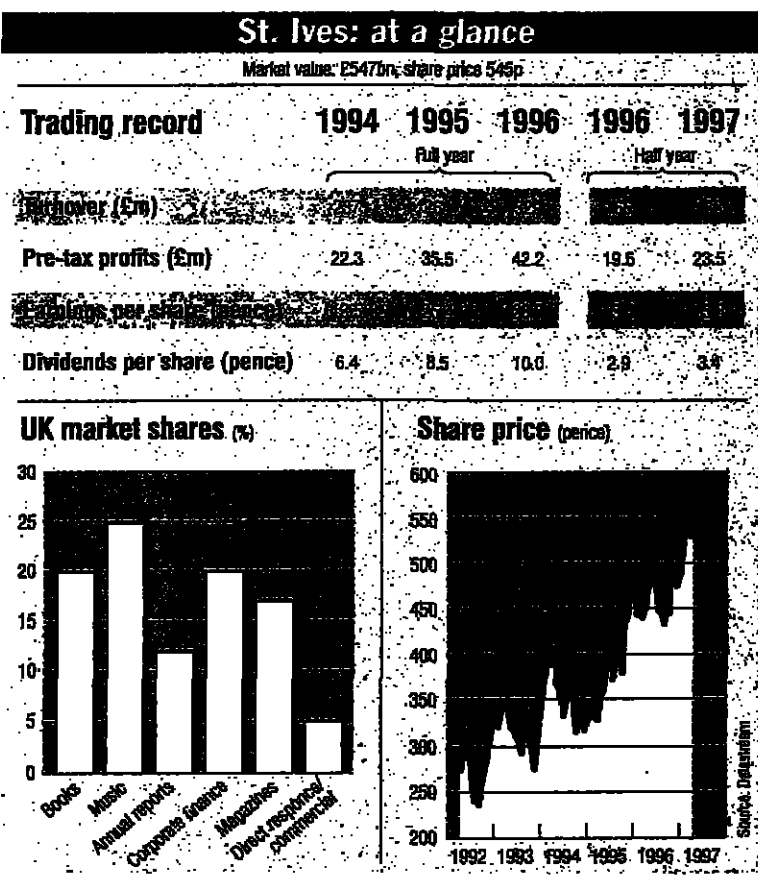
Unsurprisingly, there are 32 times the number of Porsches in Chelsea as there are in Barnsley. Obviously there aren't that many City bonuses reaching their way north.

Congratulations to Abbey National's new head spokesman Nick Chaloner who arrives from pr agency Hill & Knowlton on 9 May. Mr Chaloner succeeds Jane Ageros, who has been poached by US investment banking giant Merrill Lynch for a rumoured £200,000-plus.

Mr Chaloner, 41, will be tussling a more modest sum. He once served in the Queen's Own Hussars and also managed Hill & Knowlton's Athens office for a spell.

While I hate the change of names of British pubs, perhaps Allied Domecq isn't getting it so wrong. A former Halifax Building Society in Birmingham has been reborn as £1.2m and becomes The Factotum and Firkin. A converted post office in Bromley is reborn as the Philatelist and Firkin; unused courts in Leeds are now the Felon and Firkin. But what will they call a disused court in Muswell Hill, north London?

John Willcock



Fuel clean-up plan would cost £35bn, say oil firms

The latest twist in Europe's green politics has left the industry fuming, writes Chris Godsmark

The oil industry yesterday warned of dire consequences for investment and jobs, along with higher petrol prices, if tougher motor fuel standards drawn by green party Euro-MPs in Brussels, were adopted by ministers in two months time.

The latest in a series of furious arguments between the environmental lobby and the big international oil groups could threaten to engulf the next UK government in a complex row in the immediate aftermath of the general election.

The Euro-MPs' standards to clean up harmful chemicals in petrol and diesel fuels would, according to the oil industry, cost some £35bn (£35bn) to implement across the European Union and force British oil refineries to invest an extra £700m a year for the next 15 years.

Worse still, the companies claim, they come at a time when profit margins have been pared to the bone in the face of intense petrol price wars. According to the UK Petroleum Industry Association, the entire oil refining and marketing industry made profits in 1995 of just £100m.

Privately, oil companies blame the debate on a failure of communication between the European Commission and the European Parliament in Strasbourg. Back in 1994 the Parliament and council of ministers issued a directive mandating the Commission to draw up new fuel standards from 2000.

For three years the Commission worked with the oil and motor industries to develop fuel standards which are, they claim, the toughest in the world. They would reduce sulphur in petrol and especially diesel by a third from the year 2000, with tougher rules from 2005 if air quality targets were not met.

Yet a fortnight ago the strategy collapsed dramatically when Euro-MPs tabled an amendment proposing their own, much higher standards. The embarrassment for the oil companies and the Commission was compounded by the fact that the alternative plans were unanimously supported by the European Parliament. Some 80 per cent of Euro-MPs voted

in favour of the Green plan, with just 50 rejecting it.

The vote astonished the oil industry. Steve Theede, chief executive of Conoco's refining and marketing division, believed the earlier plan represented a substantial breakthrough. "Now all that work – which took three years and cost millions – has effectively been thrown away by the European Parliament in return for negligible benefits which seem wholly out of proportion to the cost," he said.

The stiff new emissions proposals are the work of Noel Manere, a French Green Party Euro-MP and mayor of Bejles near Bordeaux. His proposals would cut sulphur emissions to just a tenth of their current levels by 2005. From 2000 to 2005 they would require garages to offer two varieties of diesel fuel, one with the lowest levels of sulphur and another "dirty" diesel with a higher content.

Mike Friend, director gener-

al of the Petroleum Industry Association, said this would mean

huge investment in a completely different form of refining process to "crack" or break down the crude oil into different by-products. He estimated this would mean raising investment on environmental measures from £300m a year in the UK to £1bn. Over a 15-year investment cycle the industry would have to find an extra £10bn, money that would inevitably be passed on to drivers in higher pump prices.

"The companies will also be hit because some will probably not be able to find the money for the investment. There could be a further shake-out," he added, on top of the recent merger of BP and Mobil's garage chains and the proposed merger of Gulf and Elf's marketing operations.

Mr Manere insisted that the oil companies' figures were hugely inflated. "The oil in-

dustry is a pressure group like any other. They are crying wolf over this." Ironically, both sides are using the same research, commissioned by the EC and drawn up by the industry consultants Arthur D Little, to back up their case.

The next stage in the labyrinthine workings of Euro-decision making is for ministers from national governments to debate the new proposals on 19 and 20 June. However, the European Parliament's view is no longer of mainly symbolic importance. New rules introduced in the Maastricht Treaty mean the ministers have to take into account the view of the Parliament.

Because the Parliament's vote was so decisive, the Commission will almost certainly have to raise its own emissions proposals. "The answer will have to be some way in the middle," said Mr Friend.

With little time left, frustrated oil executives are regrouping for another lobbying effort but admit to having been outmanoeuvred. The economics of improved air quality may be complex, but inevitably consumers will end up paying the bill.



In the pipeline: The European Parliament's plan would cut sulphur emissions to a tenth of their current levels by 2005. Garages would have to offer two varieties of diesel fuel

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business

Barclays chiefs defend £2.8m paid to BZW head

Directors of Barclays, the high street bank, yesterday had to defend against sharp questions from shareholders at the annual general meeting over the £2.8m paid to Bill Harrison, head of its BZW investment banking business.

"How is Harrison worth £2.8m for three months' work?" asked Robert Muriel to the applause of other shareholders. "Is he going to get £2.8m for every three months he works, plus a long-term bonus package?"

Andrew Buxton, chairman, and Martin Taylor, chief executive, defended the payment by replying that an investment bank had to be run by the best people, and they were expensive. Most of Mr Harrison's 1996 payment was buying out the bonus he would have received from his previous employer, Robert Fleming.

There was also criticism from one shareholder over the recent appearance of Lord Lawson, the former Chancellor of the

Exchequer and a director, in television commercials for a competitor, the M&G Group. Lord Lawson narrates and appears in the commercials for M&G's personal equity plans.

Philip Reid, a shareholder, claimed that his work for M&G exposed double standards, in that employees could not make deposits with other banks, yet a director was able to advertise for other financial institutions.

Drawing on a previous statement over the issue, Mr Buxton said he would rather that Lord Lawson had not done the commercials and that he had informed the bank beforehand. He also recommended to the meeting that Lord Lawson should be re-elected to the board because of his value to the bank.

Despite the criticisms, Mr Harrison, who joined the group last October, and Lord Lawson were re-elected to the board. Four other directors, who were also up for re-election, were voted back on to the board.

Barclays shares rose 6.5p to

£10.35 yesterday, largely reflecting a reasonably upbeat trading statement by Mr Buxton. He said Barclays had begun the year well, with personal and business banking continuing the strong performance of 1996. He added that provisions in business banking remained at a low level, "a reflection of economic conditions and the prudent management of our book". BZW was having an encouraging first quarter.

Barclays' profits in 1996 increased by 13 per cent, even though BZW's contribution dropped 29 per cent. Mr Buxton said the bank's branch network remained a key part of strategy for the future, but customers were looking for convenience and choice in how, when and where they could do their banking, through such means as telephone banking and PC banking. The telephone banking service for personal customers, Barclaycard, had 330,000 users and would continue to grow, he added.



Under attack: Chairman Andrew Buxton (left) and chief executive Martin Taylor had to answer shareholder critics

NatWest board grilled on losses

Lord Alexander, chairman of NatWest Bank, told shareholders at a stormy annual meeting yesterday that a full report into the recent £77m loss on interest rate options would be ready within a month, but admitted he could not say whether the whole report would be made public.

The board of NatWest rejected calls for the resignation of Martin Owen, chief executive of NatWest Markets where the losses took place, and the bank's auditors, KPMG. The criticisms by shareholders hit sentiment in the bank's shares, which closed down 3.5p at 693.5p.

Shareholders grilled the board over the losses and where the blame should lie. Lord Alexander said that although it was unlikely the whole report would be made public, "what I can promise you is that shareholders will be kept informed of any significant developments". The report is being prepared by Coopers & Lybrand, chartered accountants, and Linklaters & Paines, the law firm.

Lord Alexander was also forced to defend the bank's auditors, KPMG, against suggestions that they should share blame for the options debacle. Lord Alexander said KPMG deserved "fair treatment" until the report was produced.

Despite shareholders' requests, Lord Alexander said he was not willing to change the term of office of the auditors. The resolution at the meeting to reappoint the auditors was passed on a poll vote after failing on a show of hands. A shareholder said: "They [the auditors] have been paid as experts and they are not acting as experts."

Lord Alexander faced further opposition when it came to re-electing six directors to the board, normally a routine matter. Rory Murphy, general secretary of the NatWest Staff Association, presented himself as a seventh candidate and said shareholders should block the re-election of Mr Owen.

Mr Murphy denied the £200,000 cut Mr Owen took in his bonus due to the options trading losses. Lord Alexander rejected Mr Murphy's appointment and instead backed Mr Owen, who won the vote.

Noble joins biotech fledgling

Magnus Grimond

James Noble, who in February unexpectedly quit his job as finance director of British Biotech leaving behind share option profits of £2.8m, is to become a non-executive director at Innovative Technologies Group.

He will help the fledgling medical technology group develop a corporate strategy to see it through its development phase and arrange deals with international drug groups.

Mr Noble said yesterday he was looking at other non-executive positions in biotech groups and had also taken on a part-time executive role at a small start-up company in the sector.

He and fellow directors of British Biotech, the UK's leading group in the biotechnology sector, courted controversy when in December 1995 they exercised options after the



New job: Ex-British Biotech director James Noble

shares had soared on the back of very early stage results for the company's Marimastat anti-cancer drug.

After the original £1.7m prof-

it from that deal, Mr Noble exercised further options which netted him £2.5m after walking away from British Biotech earlier this year. Even so his sudden departure from the company caused surprise in some quarters, given the large amount of potential option profits he was leaving behind.

The former City merchant banker with Kleinwort Benson said yesterday: "It was a bit of a brave thing to do, but everyone said I was crazy when I left Kleinwort."

He said he now believed his job was complete at British Biotech after last July's £143m rights issue, the proceeds of which are expected to see the group through until first sales of Marimastat, although he added that he had wanted to complete the marketing deal with Tanabe of Japan, finally sealed at the end of last year.

Mr Noble will pick up £20,000 a year from his post with Innovative Technology. As a non-executive director, he is banned by the Greenbury code on corporate pay from picking up any more share options, but Keith Gilding, chief executive, said he would probably "work out a way of giving him some sort of success-related fee".

The company, which in March raised £4.1m in a placing, has developed what it claims are new cost-effective ways of dressing wounds. The three main products include a leg ulcer bandage based on alginate derived from seaweed and a polyurethane film which it is claimed will allow wounds to breathe more effectively.

The group announced that losses deepened from £2.7m to £3.9m in the year to December, on turnover raised from £190,000 to £1.44m.

Ordnance workers fear job cuts in French link

Michael Harrison

Royal Ordnance workers plan to picket the Defence Secretary Michael Portillo tonight in protest at the threat to jobs if the company proceeds with a joint venture with a French munitions supplier.

Unions fear that if the joint venture with the French company Societe Nationale Poudres et Explosifs (SNPE) goes ahead then Royal Ordnance's Bridgwater plant in Somerset will close with the loss of hundreds of jobs.

Mr Portillo will be greeted by workers from the factory bearing placards attacking the Government's failure to intervene when he arrives to deliver a speech at the Royal United Services Institute in London.

The placards will read "Ou est Portillo?" and "Nous sommes les Miserables".

Royal Ordnance is now part of British Aerospace, which has been pursuing a series of joint ventures with European partners in defence and aerospace.

The Bridgwater plant is the country's only manufacturer of TNT-based explosives and certain other explosives used in artillery shells. The plant also makes explosives for large air defence weapons such as the 1,000lb bomb, and polymer bonded explosives which are safer to handle and store.

Jack Dromey, national secretary of the Transport and General Workers Union and spokesman for BAe's five industrial unions, said: "We sup-

port European collaboration to prevent American domination of our continent's defence manufacturing base. But no previous joint venture has surrendered vital strategic capacity. The French government is actively involved and is determined to defend French national interests. Michael Portillo is silent."

A spokesman for Royal Ordnance said: "There is overcapacity in the industry and that is one of the reasons we are looking at doing this joint venture. But no decisions have yet been taken."

The Bridgwater plant is one of three that make up Royal Ordnance's explosives and propellants division. The other two are at Bishopton in Scotland and in Holland.

IN BRIEF

Jobs boost for the West and Wales

Up to 355 jobs could be created in the West and Wales following announcements yesterday that Matsushita, the Japanese electronics company, was investing a further £13m in Port Talbot and that Direct Line, the motor insurance group, was setting up a telesales operation in Bristol. Matsushita will build a factory to make car audio speakers. The project will create 285 posts over the next four years. Meanwhile, in Bristol the telesales centre planned by Direct Line will lead to the creation of 70 jobs. A company spokesman said the number of telesales jobs could double, depending on the operation's sales success. Separately, more than 100 jobs are under threat following the appointment yesterday of receivers to Cliffe Construction in Kent. The receivers from KPMG, the chartered accountancy firm, have put the company up for sale.

Property group buys nursing homes

Nursing Home Properties has bought seven nursing homes for £12.5m. The deal takes the amount invested in a total of 62 nursing and residential homes to more than £16m since the company began trading in February 1995. The company also announced the completion of a £100m property securitisation, which it said would allow it to increase its portfolio of properties by a further £50m to around £170m. However, a related restructuring of debt will lead to a charge of around £7m against earnings and restrict the group's ability to pay dividends. The payment of a dividend for the three months to 31 March could be delayed by a month until early August.

Spring surprise for Flying Flowers

Shares in Flying Flowers soared 44p to a all-time high of 327.5p after the company said its sales this spring for Gardening Direct, the group's mail order bedding plant business, were £5.5m, significantly up from £1.5m in the same period last year. The company said this would boost full-year pre-tax profits "well in excess" of current market forecasts. Its other businesses are performing in line with expectations.

Ferraris ahead at half time

Ferraris Group's taxable profits on the half year to February climbed from £488,000 to £626,000. The interim dividend is lifted from 1.05p to 1.2p. Ken Baker, chairman, said high levels of orders and efficiency improvements at the Metalcraft and the Rotary Actuator divisions, together with the benefits of the product rationalisation at PK Morgan and Case, should ensure a successful year.

Lifejacket hitch for Cosalt

Cosalt's first-half profits increased from £1.11m to £1.65m, and the interim dividend was raised from 3.6p to 4.3p. However, the results of Crewsaver, the inflatable lifejacket manufacturing business purchased last year, were behind budget for the first half, having been hit by a reduction in margins in export markets affected by the strength of sterling.

Company Results				
	Turnover £	Pre-tax £	EPS	Dividend
Cosalt (t)	44.7m (86.1m)	1.65m (1.11m)	8.72p (6.14p)	4.3p (3.6p)
DPS Furniture (t)	128m (57.7m)	18.7m (15.4m)	11.84p (9.59p)	3.9p (3.1p)
James Diddle (t)	19.8m (17.2m)	0.02m (0.09m)	4.27p (0.34p)	2.31p (2.2p)
Ferraris (t)	10.2m (7.80m)	0.63m (0.48m)	3.9p (3.3p)	1.2p (1.06p)
Flowers Ind (t)	56.7m (24.0m)	1.09m (0.87m)	1.38p (0.63p)	0.5p (0.22p)
Formulator (t)	19.4m (22.0m)	1.25m (0.62m)	4.48p (4.77p)	1.82p (1.17p)
Innovative Technologies (t)	1.44m (0.19m)	-3.98m (-2.7m)	-3.17p (-1.11p)	-
McWaters & Shaw (t)	32.1m (24.2m)	8m (2.1m)	3.2p (0.9p)	0.86p (0.55p)
MSB Ind (t)	89.8m (38.6m)	5.43m (3.42m)	17.5p (12p)	8p (-)
St Ives (t)	183m (188m)	23.3m (18.6m)	15.78p (13.37p)	3.4p (2.5p)

(t) = Final (f) = Interim (t) = Current Age 9 mths, comparatives 12 mths

Strong sterling scars SmithKline

Magnus Grimond

SmithKline Beecham, the drugs to healthcare giant, yesterday became the latest big UK company to reveal the hammering it had received at the hands of the resurgent pound. Unveiling first-quarter figures to March, the group said currency factors had shaved £41m off pre-tax profits, slashing growth from 19 to just 8 per cent.

But the group said it expected these figures to bear the worst scars of sterling's strength and for the comparisons to improve as the year progresses, with the final outcome somewhere between £90m and £100m if current rates hold.

Jan Leschly, chief executive, brushed aside the currency factors, describing the group's performance as "excellent" in spite of the "dramatic impact of exchange rate fluctuations". He said sales in the pharmaceutical and healthcare businesses remained strong, driven by the contribution of new products such as the anti-depressant Serenax, new children's vaccines and the Nicorette and Nicoderm smoking-cessation products. "With a continued flow of new products, we are

confident that we will meet our objectives for the year," he said.

Pre-tax profits came in at £418m, up from £387m before. The company announced a first quarter dividend raised 10 per cent to 4.41p, payable from earnings per share up 7 per cent to 10.2p.

Sales were hit by a change in the method of reimbursement from customers of Diversified Pharmaceutical Services, which manages drug buying for big US insurance companies and the like. SmithKline said this reduced risk without cutting profits. Along with the currency impact, the 64 per cent slump at DPS meant overall turnover slipped 2 per cent to £1.84bn.

There were mixed responses from analysts to the 7 per cent underlying growth rate after stripping out exchange factors. Some compared it unfavourably with the double-digit rises reported recently by US groups, others said SmithKline's sales on the Continent had outpaced most of its peers.

Excluding DPS, drug sales grew 12 per cent at comparable exchange rates, driven by a good performance from new products introduced in the past five years.

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MJN 200M 324% ATI 4Mb

Overall system performance relative to MJN Pentium 133MHz processor based 166M system (MJN 133 = 100%). Based on 3D Bench Winmark 95 benchmarks.

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Foreign Exchange Rates

STERLING			DOLLAR			D-MARK		
Country	Spot	1 month	3 months	Spot	1 month	3 months	Spot	1 month
US	1.6285	0.45	0.45	1.220	28.28	28.40	0.8944	0.8944
Canada	2.2635	0.15	0.15	1.7112	30.71	30.71	1.2000	1.2000
Germany	2.0000	0.00	0.00	1.7112	30.71	30.71	1.2000	1.2000
France	6.4930	0.00	0.00	1.7112	30.71	30.71	1.2000	1.2000
Italy	270.4	0.00	0.00	1.7112	30.71	30.71	1.2000	1.2000
Japan	200.55	0.00	0.00	1.7112	30.71	30.71	1.2000	1.2000
ECU	1.4935	0.00	0.00	1.7112	30.71	30.71	1.2000	1.2000
Belgium	270.4	0.00	0.00	1.7112	30.71	30.71	1.2000	1.2000
Denmark	10.674	0.00	0.00	1.7112	30.71	30.71	1.2000	1.2000
Netherlands	3.408	0.00	0.00	1.7112	30.71	30.71	1.2000	1.2000
Sweden	1.0355	0.00	0.00	1.7112	30.71	30.71	1.2000	1.2000
Norway	11.557	0.00	0.00	1.7112	30.71	30.71	1.2000	1.2000
Spain	200.55	0.00	0.00	1.7112	30.71	30.71	1.2000	1.2000
Greece	200.55	0.00	0.00	1.7112	30.71	30.71	1.2000	1.2000
Portugal	200.55	0.00	0.00	1.7112	30.71	30.71	1.2000	1.2000
Australia	2.0000	0.00	0.00	1.7112	30.71	30.71	1.2000	1.2000
South Africa	200.55	0.00	0.00	1.7112	30.71	30.71	1.2000	1.2000
India	200.55	0.00	0.00	1.7112	30.71	30.71	1.2000	1.2000
Singapore	200.55	0.00	0.00	1.7112	30.71	30.71	1.2000	1.2000

OTHER SPOT RATES

Country	Spot	Country	Spot	Country	Spot
Argentina	1.0000	Chile	1.0000	Colombia	1.0000
Brazil	1.0000	Costa Rica	1.0000	Czech Republic	1.0000
Canada	1.0000	Cuba	1.0000	Denmark	1.0000
France	1.0000	Ecuador	1.0000	Finland	1.0000
Germany	1.0000	El Salvador	1.0000	Greece	1.0000
Italy	1.0000	Honduras	1.0000	Ireland	1.0000
Japan	1.0000	Kenya	1.0000	Israel	1.0000
South Korea	1.0000	Malaysia	1.0000	Italy	1.0000
Spain	1.0000	Mexico	1.0000	Japan	1.0000
Sweden	1.0000	Nicaragua	1.0000	South Korea	1.0000
Switzerland	1.0000	Panama	1.0000	Spain	1.0000
UK	1.0000	Paraguay	1.0000	Sweden	1.0000
USA	1.0000	Peru	1.0000	Switzerland	1.0000
		Puerto Rico	1.0000	UK	1.0000
		Romania	1.0000	USA	1.0000
		Slovakia	1.0000		
		Slovenia	1.0000		
		Sri Lanka	1.0000		
		Taiwan	1.0000		
		Tanzania	1.0000		
		Thailand	1.0000		
		Turkey	1.0000		
		Uruguay	1.0000		
		Venezuela	1.0000		

Tourist Rates

Country	Spot	Country	Spot	Country	Spot
Argentina	1.0000	Chile	1.0000	Colombia	1.0000
Brazil	1.0000	Costa Rica	1.0000	Czech Republic	1.0000
Canada	1.0000	Cuba	1.0000	Denmark	1.0000
France	1.0000	Ecuador	1.0000	Finland	1.0000
Germany	1.0000	El Salvador	1.0000	Greece	1.0000
Italy	1.0000	Honduras	1.0000	Ireland	1.0000
Japan	1.0000	Kenya	1.0000	Israel	1.0000
South Korea	1.0000	Malaysia	1.0000	Italy	1.0000
Spain	1.0000	Mexico	1.0000	Japan	1.0000
Sweden	1.0000	Nicaragua	1.0000	South Korea	1.0000
Switzerland	1.0000	Panama	1.0000	Spain	1.0000
UK	1.0000	Paraguay	1.0000	Sweden	1.0000
USA	1.0000	Peru	1.0000	Switzerland	1.0000
		Puerto Rico	1.0000	UK	1.0000
		Romania	1.0000	USA	1.0000
		Slovakia	1.0000		
		Slovenia	1.0000		
		Sri Lanka	1.0000		
		Taiwan	1.0000		
		Tanzania	1.0000		
		Thailand	1.0000		
		Turkey	1.0000		
		Uruguay	1.0000		
		Venezuela	1.0000		

Interest Rates

Country	Rate	Country	Rate	Country	Rate
UK	6.00%	Germany	5.50%	US	5.50%
France	5.50%	Canada	5.50%	Japan	5.50%
Italy	5.50%	Australia	5.50%	South Korea	5.50%
Spain	5.50%	Sweden	5.50%	Switzerland	5.50%
Denmark	5.50%	Netherlands	5.50%	Belgium	5.50%
Greece	5.50%	Portugal	5.50%	Ireland	5.50%
Finland	5.50%	Poland	5.50%	Czech Republic	5.50%
Slovakia	5.50%	Slovenia	5.50%	Sri Lanka	5.50%
Taiwan	5.50%	Tanzania	5.50%	Thailand	5.50%
Turkey	5.50%	Uruguay	5.50%	Venezuela	5.50%

Bond Yields

Country	5 yr	10 yr	Country	5 yr	10 yr
UK	7.25%	7.25%	Germany	5.50%	5.50%
France	6.00%	6.00%	Canada	5.50%	5.50%
Italy	5.50%	5.50%	Australia	5.50%	5.50%
Spain	5.50%	5.50%	Sweden	5.50%	5.50%
Denmark	5.50%	5.50%	Netherlands	5.50%	5.50%
Greece	5.50%	5.50%	Portugal	5.50%	5.50%
Finland	5.50%	5.50%	Poland	5.50%	5.50%
Slovakia	5.50%	5.50%	Slovenia	5.50%	5.50%
Taiwan	5.50%	5.50%	Tanzania	5.50%	5.50%
Thailand	5.50%	5.50%	Turkey	5.50%	5.50%
Uruguay	5.50%	5.50%	Venezuela	5.50%	5.50%

Money Market Rates

Instrument	2 years	7 days	7 months	3 months	3 months	3 months	6 1/2	6 1/2	7 1/2
Interest-free	5	5 1/2	6 1/2	6 1/2	6 1/2	6 1/2	6 1/2	6 1/2	7 1/2
Starting CDs	-	-	6 1/2	6 1/2	6 1/2	6 1/2	6 1/2	6 1/2	-
Local Authority Depos	6 1/2	6 1/2	6 1/2	6 1/2	6 1/2	6 1/2	6 1/2	6 1/2	-
Discount Market Depos	-	-	6 1/2	6 1/2	6 1/2	6 1/2	6 1/2	6 1/2	-
Treasury Bills (Buy)	-	-	6 1/2	6 1/2	6 1/2	6 1/2	6 1/2	6 1/2	-
Dollar CDs	-	-	5.52	5.57	5.52	5.52	6.17	6.17	-
ECU Linked Dep	-	-	6 1/2	6 1/2	6 1/2	6 1/2	6 1/2	6 1/2	-

sport

Instant fame for Cracknell and Foster

Mike Rowbottom witnesses the public unveiling of the new foursome formed by Steve Redgrave and Matthew Pinsent to take them into the next Olympics

Four men in a boat provoked a frenzied flickering of camera shutters here yesterday as they took to the water for the first time.

Two of the occupants, Steven Redgrave and Matthew Pinsent, were used to the media glare having put together a four-year unbeaten run in the coxed pairs event which earned them three world and two Olympic titles, culminating in Atlanta last summer.

For the two men sitting between them, however, Tim Foster and James Cracknell, this was an introduction to a new way of life as component parts of a high-profile coxed four which will be expected to bring further world and Olympic glory to Britain in the coming years.

"I didn't really know what to expect today," said Cracknell, a 24-year-old from Sutton who is qualified as a geography teacher. "I was pretty surprised at how many people came. I think I have suddenly realised what I have got myself into."

Cracknell, it transpired yesterday, was the real reason Britain's leading rowers made a hasty exit from the Olympic village before competition got under way last summer. When he was discovered to be suffering from a debilitating virus, those with whom he was sharing accommodation - including Redgrave and Pinsent - were shipped out at short notice, a move which

was said at the time to have been prompted by the chaotic Olympic transport arrangements.

"I knew I wasn't fit to compete," Cracknell said. "Walking to have lunch in the village put my pulse rate over 120. By the time I got back, all the other guys in my apartment had gone. It was like the Marie Celeste."

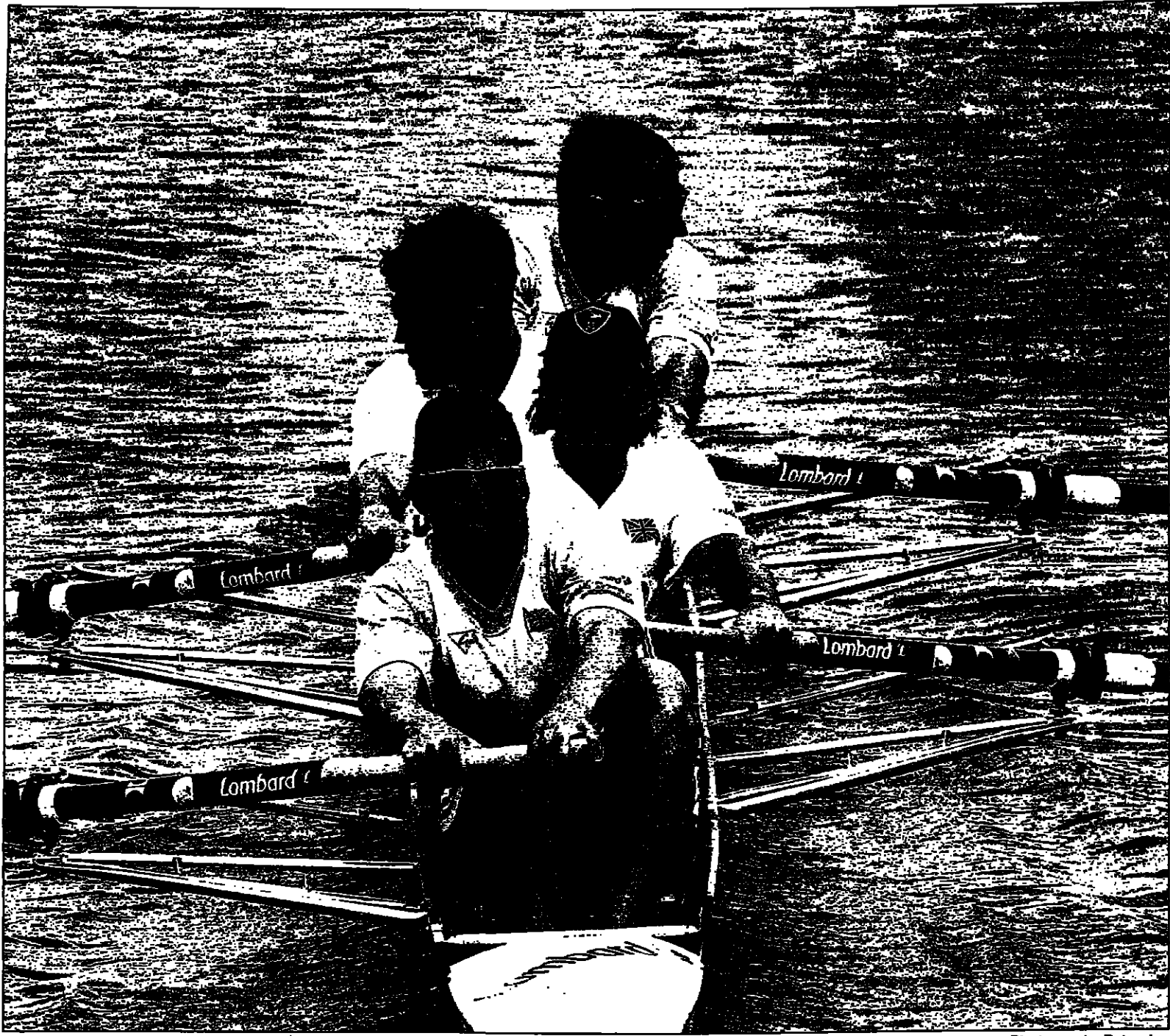
Now he is back in the fold - although things might have been different had he not escaped injury when writing off his beloved ZR 1000 motorbike in Putney two months ago.

"It's not a dream come true for me yet, but hopefully it will be later on. Steve and Matthew always get it right on the big occasion and that is where we can learn"

casualties, and that is where Tim and I can learn. That makes them unique in the sport, and probably British sport, because they get it right all the time. I think I will learn a lot more about them when we race. That's when I will see the psychology they have of racing under pressure."

Although both have earnings, Foster and Cracknell present very different appearances. Cracknell is more reserved, Foster - with a Kurt Cobain hairstyle, multi-coloured laced Doc Martens and tartan trousers - is a more obviously flamboyant character.

Last month he stroked the Oxford crew which narrowly lost the Boat Race. He has completed a one-year special diploma in social studies. Cracknell,



Matthew Pinsent (front) and Steve Redgrave (rear) bracket their new partners, James Cracknell and Tim Foster yesterday

Photograph: Peter Jay

sitting beside him, smiles at this point, and suggests that socialising rather than social studies was the core component.

Foster acknowledged that there were some potential difficulties in working with household names. "It's always going to be Steve and Matthew in a four," he said. "That's part of the deal. It's something that could become a contentious issue if you let it. But if you get on top of it and understand it, we all know we have an equal part to play."

After trials in the winter, this final group of four should have got into racing mode within the last fortnight at a training camp in Belgium - but Redgrave could not go because he required an emergency appendix operation two weeks ago. Thus it was that yesterday's outing on the Thames for the benefit of the trailing press launch and photographers gathered like expectant ducks on the bank was the first for Britain's fab foursome.

The four-times Olympic

champion did admit that he had found it hard to return to training after taking a four-month post-Olympic break. "Halfway through my first endurance circuit, I thought to myself, 'What the hell am I doing here?'" But overall, I think the break has given me new vigour.

It may come as a surprise to those who have followed Redgrave's prodigious career that he did not perform the operation himself with the aid of a mirror, knife and medical textbook.

"The consultant said I was not supposed to do anything for three weeks," he said.

Advice which, by and large, he has followed - if you discount the cycling he did earlier this week, and the weight training session he had undertaken early yesterday morning. And of course, going out in a boat. And of course, the previous day's golf game against Pinsent.

"I gave him a thrashing yesterday," Pinsent announced, his cherubic face breaking into an

other broad grin. The thought occurred that he was speaking of a man who had undergone surgery only a fortnight earlier. Then again, this is no ordinary man.

The joshing, the camaraderie is building already. It is underpinned by the knowledge that each of these men would spit blood for the common cause. Even though Redgrave is unlikely to be fully fit, their first race - at the World Cup event in Munich on 31 May to 1 June - will be something to see.

Ring pays ultimate price for failure

Rugby Union
PAUL STEPHENS

West Hartlepool have parted company with their player-coach, Mark Ring, following last Saturday's heavy home defeat by Northampton, which consigned the North-east club to relegation. In the West Country yesterday, the news was happier as Gloucester announced their first important signing in the professional era: Philippe Saint-André, the former France captain and Montpellier wing.

After the decision to release Ring from his contract, which still has a year to run, the chairman, Andy Hindle, said: "I'm sorry the experiment with Mark Ring failed. He's an honourable man who worked hard and brought on a lot of our talented youngsters, but ultimately, a coach is judged by his results."

"However, we're determined to be up there with the best, and within the next few days, I hope to announce the signing of a world-class coach, who will take West back to the First Division."

Promoted along with Sale at the end of the 1993-94 campaign, West have endured three seasons which have brought them a paltry nine victories in 56 League One matches. Since promotion, West have dismissed three coaches. The Australian Barry Taylor was sacked just five months after his appointment, ending a controversial reign which saw the departure of the No 8 Dave Watson and the bookie Simon Mitchell to Harlequins. When the Yorkshireman Barry Forster failed to improve West's lot, the Welshman Ring was handed control in January 1996.

A series of injuries has prevented Ring, an outside-half or centre, from playing a full part on the field. Off it, his decision to recruit seven Welsh players, including West's captain, Kevin Moseley, and to dispense with the services of locally born players like Alan Brown has not been a success. Ring has now paid the inevitable price of failure.

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INDEPENDENT FANTASY FOOTBALL

LATEST RESULTS AND TOP 50 TEAMS

TOP FIFTY LEAGUE TABLE

CALCULATED ON MATCHES PLAYED FROM 17 AUGUST - 13 APRIL

POS	NAME	TEAM	POINTS
1	MR PETER FRANKENTHAL	JOSI MARTI	914
2	MR PAUL MATTHEW	THE DOOR MAT	888
3	MR SEAN BROSNAN	OASIS	887
4	MR ASHLEY BRETTE	RELEGATION 12	881
5	MR SCOTT MCINERNEY		877
6	MR SIMON LIU	DEFENCE ROVERS	877
7	MR WILLIAM BARR	KRUEGER F.C.	877
8	MR KEITH HARRY	ORGANIC MANURE F.C.	874
9	MR RICK YAP	OUT OF MIND	871
10	MR LAN GROUT	SILK CITY	870
11	MR ALEXANDRA FEAST	THE ZOROSTRIAN ZENETIC ZYGORE849	869
12	MR G WHITE	WHITE CITY	867
13	MR BEN KENDALL	TURKEY'S TRIGGERS	865
14	MR PETER FRANKENTHAL	SANDING	863
15	MR D R MILLS	THE MUSHROOM LAYERS	862
16	MR PAUL HOOKER	NOBBIES BOYS	860
17	MR JOHN COX	SOUTHRILL F.C.	859
18	MR ANDREW BOLTON	ANDREWS B TEAM	859
19	MR ADAM HOGG	BLAGGY HOGG	858
20	MR O J JOHNSON	THE AWAY WINNERS	857
21	NEIL ENTWISTLE	JERRY BANK ATHLETIC	857
22	MR TONY AKINDALE	OLLIE VILLA	856
23	MR GARFIELD MACALEN	GARFIELD BOYS 2ND	856
24	MR GRAHAM LONGSDANE	SANDLING STROLLERS	856
25	MR JONATHAN DAVIS	GOLDEN TEAM	856
26	MR J LILLY	JEWELS REMY'S GONE MISSING	855
27	MR ADAM DEACON	ADAM ACES	855
28	MR MARK HAYDEN	TROWBRIDGE WANDERERS	854
29	MR S J PERRY	THE GREAT ESCAPERS	852
30	MR SIMON DRAPER	PLATE F.C.	85
31	MR S J GODWIN	NORWOOD	851
32	MR J ALDOUS	MEN BEHAVING WELL	850
33	MR PAUL HARRIS	CELL CITY	850
34	MR BEN ANDREWS	BOOZEY'S BAYTLERS	849
35	MR A MORGAN	KICK START	849
36	MR L KETTELHEWELL		849
37	MR TERRY JONES	ANDROGEN UNITED	848
38	MR IVAN HOOD	EAST GATE ROVERS	848
39	MR PETER FRANKENTHAL	ARLENSU	848
40	MR P CURRAN		848
41	MR ANDREW GODDEN	RC ALZEY	848
42	MR A SWANNY	DOG'S BRICK	847
43	MR F J GREAVES	ANONYMOUS ROVERS	847
44	MR P HEDDINGWAY	WAGON WHEELS	847
45	MR ANDY LANE	IF ANYONE CAN TOUCAN	847
46	MR MARTIN KENNICK	WILD ROVERS	846
47	MR RICHARD SMITH	DYNAMO CHICKEN KEY	846
48	MR DAVID MAHER	THE ELITE OF THE ELITE	846
49	MR GARY HAYLES	101 ALLSTARS	845

THE INDEPENDENT INDEPENDENT ON SUNDAY



Today we publish the latest results in our Independent Fantasy Football game, supported by Philips Energy Saver Light Bulbs.

The Team Market and Scores table published below, shows four scores. The Week 36 (Wk 36) column lists all points scored in Premiership matches played between Monday 14 April - Sunday 20 April inclusive. Column B lists all points scored before the transfer period. Column A lists all points scored after the transfer period. The Overall (Ov) column lists the total amount of points scored in all matches played from Saturday 17 August - Sunday 20 April.

Also published today is the Top 50 League table (see left). It lists the overall top scoring Independent Fan-

tasy Football managers and their teams for matches played between Saturday 17 August - Sunday 13 April.

Results will be published every Wednesday in The Independent for all games played from the previous Monday to Sunday inclusive. They will also appear the following Sunday, in the Independent

SCORING SYSTEM

4 points for a goal ■ 4 points for a goalkeeper/defender clean sheet ■ 3 points for a successful assist ■ 1 point when a player is selected and plays ■ 1 point for a winning goal ■ 3 points for a manager win, 1 point for a draw ■ Lose 1 point for a yellow card ■ Lose 3 points for a red card

on Sunday. The overall Top 50 League table will be printed every Wednesday and again on Sunday. Terms and conditions as previously published

PRIZES

The overall winner at the end of the season will be the entrant who has accrued more points than any other Independent Fantasy Football team in that time. Win the ultimate prize - a trip to the 1998 World Cup in France. The winner, plus companion, will see all the action of a quarter-final and a semi-final of their choice, plus the final. In addition, the highest scoring team each month will win a pair of tickets to one of England's World Cup qualifying games at Wembley.

TEAM MARKET AND SCORES

OVERALL SCORE CALCULATED ON MATCHES PLAYED FROM 17 AUGUST - 20 APRIL; WEEK 35 SCORE CALCULATED ON MATCHES PLAYED FROM 14 APRIL - 20 APRIL

CODE	PLAYER	TEAM	POINTS	VALUE	CODE	PLAYER	TEAM	POINTS	VALUE	CODE	PLAYER	TEAM	POINTS	VALUE	CODE	PLAYER	TEAM	POINTS	VALUE				
Wk36	B	A	Ov	(£m)	Wk36	B	A	Ov	(£m)	Wk36	B	A	Ov	(£m)	Wk36	B	A	Ov	(£m)				
GOALKEEPERS																							
300	Seaman	ARS	0	38	21	59	5.9	477	Ruddock	LIV	0	2	31	3.3	600	Asmovic	DER	0	19	40	59	2.3	
301	Bronch	AV	1	0	19	47	4.0	478	Stokes	TOT	0	0	6	2.2	601	Van Der Laan	DER	0	4	19	3.1	1.6	
302	Worrie	ARS	0	1	19	47	4.0	479	Harland	ARS	0	0	3	1.3	602	Edwards	EVE	0	4	19	3.1	1.6	
303	Marine	CHE	0	21	0	21	3.7	480	Neville (G)	MU	3	23	51	7.4	603	Kanchelskis	EVE	0	0	17	25	4.2	6.7
304	Worrie	COV	0	0	0	0	0	481	Worrie	MU	3	23	51	7.4	604	Marshall	ARS	0	0	0	0	0	0
305	Handcock	COV	0	0	0	0	0	482	Worrie	MU	3	23	51	7.4	605	Stuart	EVE	0	0	17	41	38	2.5
306	Worrie	COV	0	0	0	0	0	483	Worrie	MU	3	23	51	7.4	606	Stuart	EVE	0	0	17	41	38	2.5
307	Worrie	COV	0	0	0	0	0	484	Worrie	MU	3	23	51	7.4	607	Stuart	EVE	0	0	17	41	38	2.5
308	Worrie	COV	0	0	0	0	0	485	Worrie	MU	3	23	51	7.4	608	Stuart	EVE	0	0	17	41	38	2.5
309	Worrie	COV	0	0	0	0	0	486	Worrie	MU	3	23	51	7.4	609	Stuart	EVE	0	0	17	41	38	2.5
310	Worrie	COV	0	0	0	0	0	487	Worrie	MU	3	23	51	7.4	610	Stuart	EVE	0	0	17	41	38	2.5
311	Worrie	COV	0	0	0	0	0	488	Worrie	MU	3	23	51	7.4	611	Stuart	EVE	0	0	17	41	38	2.5
312	Worrie	COV	0	0	0	0	0	489	Worrie	MU	3	23	51	7.4	612	Stuart	EVE	0	0	17	41	38	2.5
313	Worrie	COV	0	0	0	0	0	490	Worrie	MU	3	23	51	7.4	613	Stuart	EVE	0	0	17	41	38	2.5
314	Worrie	COV	0	0	0	0	0	491	Worrie	MU	3	23	51	7.4	614	Stuart	EVE	0	0	17	41	38	2.5
315	Worrie	COV	0	0	0	0	0	492	Worrie	MU	3	23	51	7.4	615	Stuart	EVE	0	0	17	41	38	2.5
316	Worrie	COV	0	0	0	0	0	493	Worrie	MU	3	23	51	7.4	616	Stuart	EVE	0	0	17	41	38	2.5
317	Worrie	COV	0	0	0	0	0	494	Worrie	MU	3	23	51	7.4	617	Stuart	EVE	0	0	17	41	38	2.5
318	Worrie	COV	0	0	0	0	0	495	Worrie	MU	3	23	51	7.4	618	Stuart	EVE	0	0	17	41	38	2.5
319	Worrie	COV	0	0	0	0	0	496	Worrie	MU	3	23	51	7.4	619	Stuart	EVE	0	0	17	41	38	2.5
320	Worrie	COV	0	0	0	0	0	497	Worrie	MU	3	23	51	7.4	620	Stuart	EVE	0	0	17	41	38	2.5
321	Worrie	COV	0	0	0	0	0	498	Worrie	MU	3	23	51	7.4	621	Stuart	EVE	0	0	17	41	38	2.5
322	Worrie	COV	0	0	0	0	0	499	Worrie	MU	3	23	51	7.4	622	Stuart	EVE	0	0	17	41	38	2.5
323	Worrie	COV	0	0	0	0	0	500	Worrie	MU	3	23	51	7.4	623	Stuart	EVE	0	0	17	41	38	2.5
324	Worrie	COV	0	0	0	0	0	501	Worrie	MU	3	23	51	7.4	624	Stuart	EVE	0	0	17	41	38	2.5
325	Worrie	COV	0	0	0	0	0	502	Worrie	MU	3	23	51	7.4	625	Stuart	EVE	0	0	17	41	38	2.5
326	Worrie	COV	0	0	0	0	0	503	Worrie	MU	3	23	51	7.4	626	Stuart	EVE	0	0	17	41	38	2.5
327	Worrie	COV	0	0	0	0	0	504	Worrie	MU	3	23	51	7.4	627	Stuart	EVE	0	0	17	41	38	2.5
328	Worrie	COV	0	0	0	0	0	505	Worrie	MU	3	23	51	7.4	628	Stuart	EVE	0	0	17	41	38	2.5
329	Worrie	COV	0	0	0	0	0	506	Worrie	MU	3	23	51	7.4	629	Stuart	EVE	0	0	17	41	38	2.5
330	Worrie	COV	0	0	0	0	0	507	Worrie	MU	3	23	51	7.4	630	Stuart	EVE	0	0	17	41	38	2.5
331	Worrie	COV	0	0	0	0	0	508	Worrie	MU	3	23	51	7.4	631	Stuart	EVE	0	0	17	41	38	2.5
332	Worrie	COV	0	0	0	0	0	509	Worrie	MU	3	23	51	7.4	632	Stuart	EVE	0	0	17	41	38	2.5
333	Worrie	COV	0	0	0	0	0	510	Worrie	MU	3	23	51	7.4	633	Stuart	EVE	0	0	17	41	38	2.5
334	Worrie	COV	0	0	0	0	0	511	Worrie	MU	3	23	51	7.4	634	Stuart	EVE	0	0	17	41	38	2.5
335	Worrie	COV	0	0	0	0	0	512	Worrie	MU	3	23	51	7.4	635	Stuart	EVE	0	0	17	41	38	2.5
336	Worrie	COV	0	0	0	0	0	513	Worrie	MU	3	23	51	7.4	636	Stuart	EVE	0	0	17	41	38	2.5
337	Worrie	COV	0	0	0	0	0	514	Worrie	MU	3	23	51	7.4	637	Stuart	EVE	0	0	17	41	38	2.5
338	Worrie	COV	0	0	0	0	0	515	Worrie	MU	3	23	51	7.4	638	Stuart	EVE	0	0	17	41	38	2.5
339	Worrie	COV	0	0	0	0	0	516	Worrie	MU	3	23	51	7.4	639	Stuart	EVE	0	0	17	41	38	2.5
340	Worrie	COV	0	0	0	0	0	517	Worrie	MU	3	23	51	7.4	640	Stuart	EVE	0	0	17	41	38	2.5
341	Worrie	COV	0	0	0	0	0	518	Worrie	MU	3	23	51	7.4	641	Stuart	EVE	0	0	17	41	38	2.5
342	Worrie	COV	0	0	0	0	0	519	Worrie	MU	3	23	51	7.4	642	Stuart	EVE	0	0	17	41	38	2.5
343	Worrie	COV	0	0	0	0	0	520	Worrie	MU	3	23	51	7.4	643	Stuart	EVE	0	0	17	41	38	2.5
344	Worrie	COV	0	0	0	0	0	521	Worrie	MU	3	23	51	7.4	644	Stuart	EVE	0	0	17	41	38	2.5
345	Worrie	COV	0	0	0	0	0	522	Worrie	MU	3	23	51	7.4	645	Stuart	EVE	0	0	17	41	38	2.5
346	Worrie	COV	0	0	0	0	0	523	Worrie	MU	3	23	51	7.4	646	Stuart	EVE	0	0	17	41	38	2.5
347	Worrie	COV	0	0	0	0	0	524	Worrie	MU	3	23	51	7.4	647	Stuart	EVE	0	0	17	41	38	2.5
348	Worrie	COV	0	0	0	0	0	525	Worrie	MU	3	23	51	7.4	648	Stuart	EVE	0	0	17	41	38	2.5
349	Worrie	COV	0	0	0	0	0	526	Worrie	MU	3	23	51	7.4	649	Stuart	EVE	0	0	17	41	38	2.5
350	Worrie	COV	0	0	0	0	0	527	Worrie	MU	3	23	51	7.4	650	Stuart	EVE	0	0	17	41	38	2.5
351	Worrie	COV	0	0	0	0	0	528	Worrie	MU	3	23	51	7.4	651	Stuart	EVE	0	0	17	41	38	2.5
352	Worrie	COV	0	0	0	0	0	529	Worrie	MU	3	23	51	7.4	652	Stuart	EVE	0	0	17	41	38	2.5
353	Worrie	COV	0	0	0	0	0	530	Worrie	MU	3	23	51	7.4	653	Stuart	EVE	0	0	17	41	38	2.5
354	Worrie	COV	0	0	0	0	0	531	Worrie	MU	3	23	51	7.4	654	Stuart	EVE	0	0	17	41	38	2.5
355	Worrie	COV	0	0	0	0	0	532	Worrie	MU	3	23	51	7.4	655	Stuart	EVE	0	0	17	41	38	2.5
356	Worrie	COV	0	0	0	0	0	533	Worrie	MU	3	23	51	7.4	656	Stuart	EVE	0	0	17	41	38	2.5
357	Worrie	COV	0	0	0	0	0	534	Worrie	MU	3	23	51	7.4	657	Stuart	EVE	0	0	17	41	38	2.5
358	Worrie	COV	0	0	0	0	0	535	Worrie	MU	3	23	51	7.4	658	Stuart	EVE	0	0	17	41	38	2.5
359	Worrie	COV	0	0	0	0	0	536	Worrie	MU	3	23	51	7.4	659	Stuart	EVE	0	0	17	41	38	2.5
360	Worrie	COV	0	0	0	0	0	537	Worrie	MU	3	23	51	7.4	660	Stuart	EVE	0	0	17	41	38	2.5
361	Worrie	COV	0	0	0	0	0	538	Worrie	MU	3	23	51	7.4	661	Stuart	EVE	0	0	17	41	38	2.5
362	Worrie	COV	0	0	0	0	0	539	Worrie	MU	3	23	51	7.4	662	Stuart	EVE	0	0	17	41	38	2.5
363	Worrie	COV	0	0	0	0	0	540	Worrie	MU	3	23	51	7.4	663	Stuart	EVE	0	0	17	41	38	2.5
364	Worrie	COV	0	0	0	0	0	541	Worrie	MU	3	23	51	7.4	664	Stuart	EVE	0	0	17	41	38	2.5
365	Worrie	COV	0	0	0	0	0	542	Worrie	MU	3	23	51	7.4	665	Stuart	EVE	0	0	17	41	38	2.5
366	Worrie	COV	0	0	0	0	0	543	Worrie	MU	3	23	51	7.4	666	Stuart	EVE	0	0	17	41	38	2.5
367	Worrie	COV	0	0	0	0	0	544	Worrie	MU	3	23	51	7.4	667	Stuart	EVE	0	0	17	41	38	2.5
368	Worrie	COV	0	0	0	0	0	545	Worrie	MU	3	23	51	7.4	668	Stuart	EVE	0	0	17	41	38	2.5
369	Worrie	COV	0	0	0	0	0	546	Worrie	MU	3	23	51	7.4	669	Stuart	EVE	0	0	17	41	38	2.5
370	Worrie	COV	0	0	0	0	0	547	Worrie	MU	3	23	51	7.4	670	Stuart	EVE	0	0	17	41	38	2.5
371	Worrie	COV	0	0	0	0	0	548	Worrie	MU	3	23	51	7.4	671	Stuart	EVE						

SPORT

Davis shows all his old spring

Racing

GREG WOOD reports from PuncHESTOWN

The tipsters who add the comments to the PuncHESTOWN racecard are not ones to commit themselves too firmly. "Running well enough" began the judgement on one of yesterday's runners, "however is not the force of old. Place possibilities." In the same race, another runner was "a disappointing individual who cannot be ruled out", and so it went on. With all eventualities covered, they probably retired to the bar to enjoy a stress-free afternoon, and when it is Festival time at PuncHESTOWN, few would blame them.

In its history and prestige, this meeting will never rival the original Festival at Cheltenham, but it still has several significant advantages. This is Cheltenham without the crush, the mess and the headlong dash towards disaster. It is an easy-going celebration of National Hunt racing, yet one at which the delight in a winning favourite or an ac-

complished jumper is undiminished, and when a horse is both at once, as Klairon Davis was in the big race yesterday, there is no finer place to be.

Klairon Davis is no longer the champion two-mile chaser, having finished only fourth to Martha's Son at Cheltenham, but the arrival of spring always revives his spirits and this year

RICHARD EDMONDSON
NAP: Pike Creek
(Epsom 3.40)
NE: Silver Groom
(Epsom 2.35)

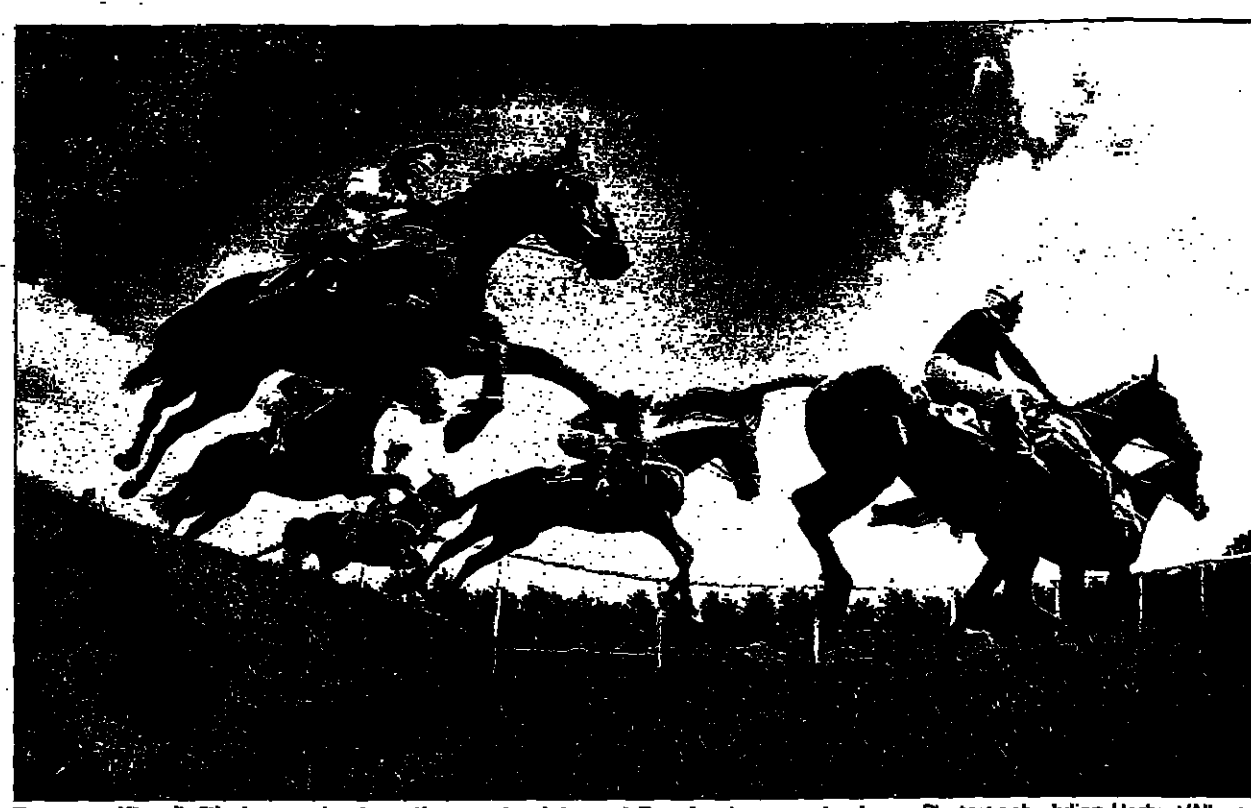
is no exception. Arthur Moore's runner was soon ahead and flying his fences, and for all that he was giving 10lb and more to six talented opponents, defeat was soon out of the question.

"It'll take a good one to lower his colours at Cheltenham next year," Moore said afterwards, already plotting a path towards the Queen Mother Champion Chase. "There's nothing here at Christmas, so we'll probably start off in the Tingle Creek, and then build up

to Cheltenham." Forget minor diversions such as the Guinness, Derby and Arc, the next main event in the racing calendar is now just 11 months away.

The 1998 Cheltenham Festival was also on the mind of Stan Clarke, who won the Grand National with Lord Cyllene two weeks ago and now has an excellent hurdler to look forward to as well. Midnight Legend made his name as a handicapper with a liking for Goodwood, but at the age of six - and still, importantly for his future, with his reproductive system intact - he has found a calling as one of the year's best novice hurdlers.

David Nicholson, Midnight Legend's trainer, said after his comfortable success in the country. "Fridge, the Champion Novice, has been given four different sets of instructions to Richard Johnson, the colt's jockey. 'I told him jump off and bite, jump off and drop in, jump off upside or do his own thing,' Nicholson said, prompting the thought that if he ever gives up training, he could always write the comments in the PuncHESTOWN racecard.



Baraway King (left) clears a bank on the way to victory at PuncHESTOWN yesterday. Photograph: Julian Herbert/Allsport

Clarke expects Midnight Legend to pursue one more campaign over hurdles, with the Champion Hurdle the obvious aim, before retiring to become that valuable stud rider, a jumping station with top-class form over obstacles.

British punters do not need to cross the sea to enjoy the

PuncHESTOWN experience to day, since the two most valuable races on the card have been spiced into Channel 4's coverage from Epsom. The Stanley Cooker Champion Novices Hurdle will probably be little more than a lap of honour for Istabraq, who made a great many Irish people very happy

when winning the Royal Sun Alliance Hurdle at Cheltenham, though anyone looking to buy money at odds-on should ponder on what that supreme effort may have taken out of him.

The Heineken Gold Cup is far more competitive, with three British runners, Noyan, Carole's Crusader and General Pango,

among the 18-strong field. The favourite, though, is likely to be Amble Speedy, who appeared to win the Irish Grand National by the thick end of two lengths last time out, only for the photo-finish camera to prove Mudahim the victor. As the racecard might put it, he has prospects.

PUNCHESTOWN

2.40 STANLEY COOKER CHAMPION NOVICE HURDLE
£25,000 added 2m 4f Penalty Value £18,600

1 212224 CLONMAGE (5) (J. J. O'Brien) 12.0
2 112212 LINDY (5) (J. J. O'Brien) 12.0
3 102211 GLEBE LAD (5) (J. J. O'Brien) 11.5
4 102211 GLEBE LAD (5) (J. J. O'Brien) 11.5
5 211121 GLEBE LAD (5) (J. J. O'Brien) 11.5
6 211121 GLEBE LAD (5) (J. J. O'Brien) 11.5
7 211121 GLEBE LAD (5) (J. J. O'Brien) 11.5
8 211121 GLEBE LAD (5) (J. J. O'Brien) 11.5
9 211121 GLEBE LAD (5) (J. J. O'Brien) 11.5
10 211121 GLEBE LAD (5) (J. J. O'Brien) 11.5
11 211121 GLEBE LAD (5) (J. J. O'Brien) 11.5
12 211121 GLEBE LAD (5) (J. J. O'Brien) 11.5

3.15 HEINEKEN GOLD CUP (HANDICAP CHASE)
£58,200 2m 12f Penalty Value £37,200

1 111121 GLEBE LAD (5) (J. J. O'Brien) 12.0
2 111121 GLEBE LAD (5) (J. J. O'Brien) 12.0
3 111121 GLEBE LAD (5) (J. J. O'Brien) 12.0
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9 111121 GLEBE LAD (5) (J. J. O'Brien) 12.0
10 111121 GLEBE LAD (5) (J. J. O'Brien) 12.0
11 111121 GLEBE LAD (5) (J. J. O'Brien) 12.0
12 111121 GLEBE LAD (5) (J. J. O'Brien) 12.0

EPSON

2.05 SPENDER (nb)
3.40 Hazard A Guess
3.10 The Negotiator
3.40 Punt Monk

3.10 PALLO SKY (nap)
4.40 Punt Monk

GOING: Good (Good to Firm in places, watering - petromat reading - 3.4).

STALLS: H - outside; red - inside.

DRAW ADVANTAGE: Low for 7 to 10f.

Left-hand course, sharp and undulating. The straight of 10f is the fastest in the country.

Course: 6 of 10m - 11m from the centre of London. Three railway stations serve the course: Epsom (from Victoria and Waterloo) and the nearest Epsom station is 'Epsom' (from Victoria and Waterloo). The course is 6 of 10m - 11m from the centre of London. Three railway stations serve the course: Epsom (from Victoria and Waterloo) and the nearest Epsom station is 'Epsom' (from Victoria and Waterloo).

2.05 BANSTEAD HANDICAP (CLASS C) £28,000 added
6f Penalty Value £5,446

1 202041 WEST VENTURE (5) (J. J. O'Brien) 12.0
2 202041 WEST VENTURE (5) (J. J. O'Brien) 12.0
3 202041 WEST VENTURE (5) (J. J. O'Brien) 12.0
4 202041 WEST VENTURE (5) (J. J. O'Brien) 12.0
5 202041 WEST VENTURE (5) (J. J. O'Brien) 12.0
6 202041 WEST VENTURE (5) (J. J. O'Brien) 12.0
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9 202041 WEST VENTURE (5) (J. J. O'Brien) 12.0
10 202041 WEST VENTURE (5) (J. J. O'Brien) 12.0
11 202041 WEST VENTURE (5) (J. J. O'Brien) 12.0
12 202041 WEST VENTURE (5) (J. J. O'Brien) 12.0

2.35 CITY AND SUBURBAN HANDICAP (CLASS B)
£12,000 added 1m 2f 10yds Penalty Value £8,364

1 202041 WEST VENTURE (5) (J. J. O'Brien) 12.0
2 202041 WEST VENTURE (5) (J. J. O'Brien) 12.0
3 202041 WEST VENTURE (5) (J. J. O'Brien) 12.0
4 202041 WEST VENTURE (5) (J. J. O'Brien) 12.0
5 202041 WEST VENTURE (5) (J. J. O'Brien) 12.0
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EPSON

2.05 SPENDER (nb)
3.40 Hazard A Guess
3.10 The Negotiator
3.40 Punt Monk

3.10 PALLO SKY (nap)
4.40 Punt Monk

GOING: Good (Good to Firm in places, watering - petromat reading - 3.4).

STALLS: H - outside; red - inside.

DRAW ADVANTAGE: Low for 7 to 10f.

Left-hand course, sharp and undulating. The straight of 10f is the fastest in the country.

Course: 6 of 10m - 11m from the centre of London. Three railway stations serve the course: Epsom (from Victoria and Waterloo) and the nearest Epsom station is 'Epsom' (from Victoria and Waterloo).

3.15 HEINEKEN GOLD CUP (HANDICAP CHASE)
£58,200 2m 12f Penalty Value £37,200

1 111121 GLEBE LAD (5) (J. J. O'Brien) 12.0
2 111121 GLEBE LAD (5) (J. J. O'Brien) 12.0
3 111121 GLEBE LAD (5) (J. J. O'Brien) 12.0
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EPSON

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6f Penalty Value £5,446

1 202041 WEST VENTURE (5) (J. J. O'Brien) 12.0
2 202041 WEST VENTURE (5) (J. J. O'Brien) 12.0
3 202041 WEST VENTURE (5) (J. J. O'Brien) 12.0
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2.35 CITY AND SUBURBAN HANDICAP (CLASS B)
£12,000 added 1m 2f 10yds Penalty Value £8,364

1 202041 WEST VENTURE (5) (J. J. O'Brien) 12.0
2 202041 WEST VENTURE (5) (J. J. O'Brien) 12.0
3 202041 WEST VENTURE (5) (J. J. O'Brien) 12.0
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EPSON

2.05 SPENDER (nb)
3.40 Hazard A Guess
3.10 The Negotiator
3.40 Punt Monk

3.10 PALLO SKY (nap)
4.40 Punt Monk

GOING: Good (Good to Firm in places, watering - petromat reading - 3.4).

STALLS: H - outside; red - inside.

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2.05 BANSTEAD HANDICAP (CLASS C) £28,000 added
6f Penalty Value £5,446

1 202041 WEST VENTURE (5) (J. J. O'Brien) 12.0
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12 202041 WEST VENTURE (5) (J. J. O'Brien) 12.0

2.35 CITY AND SUBURBAN HANDICAP (CLASS B)
£12,000 added 1m 2f 10yds Penalty Value £8,364

1 202041 WEST VENTURE (5) (J. J. O'Brien) 12.0
2 202041 WEST VENTURE (5) (J. J. O'Brien) 12.0
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3.15 HEINEKEN GOLD CUP (HANDICAP CHASE)
£58,200 2m 12f Penalty Value £37,200

1 111121 GLEBE LAD (5) (J. J. O'Brien) 12.0
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6f Penalty Value £5,446

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2.35 CITY AND SUBURBAN HANDICAP (CLASS B)
£12,000 added 1m 2f 10yds Penalty Value £8,364

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Epsom - 2.35

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2 112212 LINDY (5) (J. J. O'Brien) 12.0
3 102211 GLEBE LAD (5) (J. J. O'Brien) 11.5
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Epsom - 3.40

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2.35 CITY AND SUBURBAN HANDICAP (CLASS B)
£12,000 added 1m 2f 10yds Penalty Value £8,364

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Sir Matt Busby would have smiled at the paradox of it all. When Alex Ferguson milled against the Premiership for refusing Manchester United extra time to complete their season, a neat historic twist was being played out.

It was an act of defiance when Busby took United into the European Cup of 1956-57, the action of an unbending man who saw the club's destiny on the Continent. The Football League, which had stopped Chelsea entering the year before, was implicitly opposed. The grounds for its objections? It feared United might be unable to fulfill their domestic fixtures with the burden of extra matches.

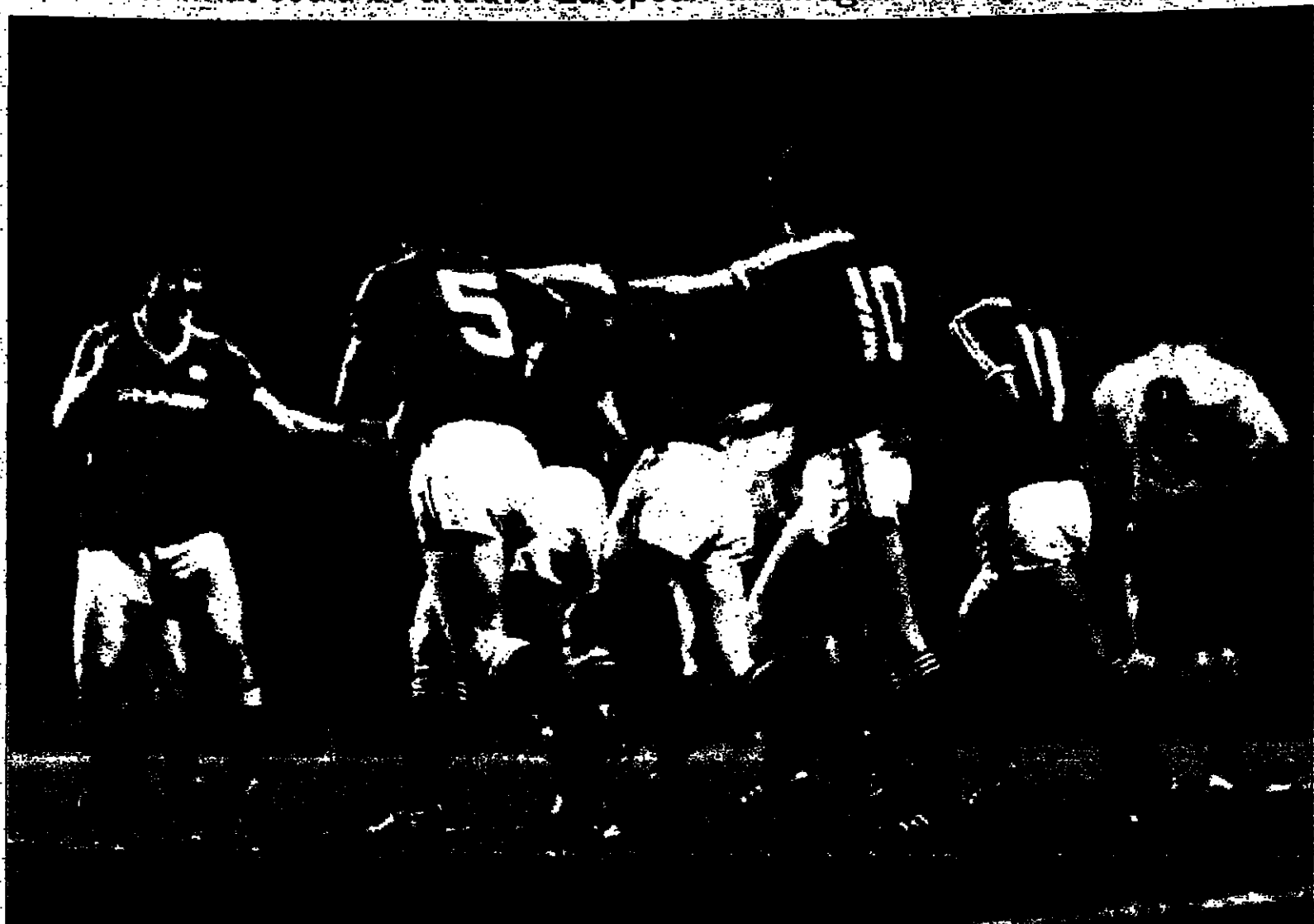
Old Trafford and Europe were intertwined from that moment, inextricably so when, 17 months after their first match against Anderlecht of

Belgium, Dussuy's team died on the runway of Munich Airport. Tragedy had pushed Europe into the folklore of the club far more heavily than any number of trophies could. Since then, any fixture against Continental opposition has carried undertones of January 6, 1958.

Which is not to say that triumph has not shone above the memory of Munich, most notably the European Cup win of 1968.

The greatest of them all was the 5-1 destruction of Benfica in the Stadium of Light, a place where the Portuguese champions had never been beaten in Europe before—but Old Trafford, too, has played host to matches laced with the extraordinary.

These are four nights to remember, from the 1950s, 60s, 70s and 80s. As for the 90s, Borussia Dortmund tonight would do nicely...



United players celebrate Bryan Robson's first of two goals against Barcelona in a 1984 Cup-Winners' Cup quarter-final Photograph: Allsport

Jari Litmanen will get special treatment from a wary Juventus today when the holders meet Ajax in their European Cup semi-final second leg return of last year's final.

The Dutch team's tricky Finns has turned into something of an obsession for Juventus after scoring against the Italians in their two previous European Cup games in the past 12 months, including the 1986 final in Rome.

The Juventus and Italy defender Ciro Ferrara made it clear who he and his teammates consider the main danger. "I think he [Litmanen] is pretty much outstanding. He's hard to control, he moves around a lot and finds the openings. He scored in Amsterdam because he found the space while in Rome he took advantage of one of our defensive errors," Ferrara said.

Litmanen expects to recover from an injury. "I'll have a final fitness test at the Della Pella tomorrow. I really hope to make

The Italians won 2-1 in Amsterdam earlier in the month of April winning the cup on penalties last year. The task is by no means impossible for Ajax since Juventus beat Borussia Dortmund 3-1 away in 1995 and then lost 2-1 at the Delle Alpi in November that year. They are unbeaten at home in the European Cup since that date.

Juventus once again must do without Alessandro Del Piero who has a muscle injury. They also have Yugoslav midfielder Vladimir Jugovic suspended for one match. Alessio Tacchinardi, 21, replaces Jugovic.

Just as worrying for Juve, they also have nine players facing suspension, from the final if they pick up another booking – a factor that could lead to a dose of caution.

Crat Alen Bogosic, whose winner against Bologna on Saturday sent Juve six points clear in the league, will be the main target man up front alongside the young, Italy international Christian Vieri.

Ajax are missing their Dutch international striker Patrick Kluivert, who underwent surgery on his knee two weeks ago and appears to have played his last game for the club before joining Milan. The key defender Winston Bogarde appears to have overcome an ankle injury while winger Tijani Babangida has a slight knee problem.

European Cup semi-final first leg (8 May 1958): Manchester United 2 Milan 1 (United lost 5-2 on aggregate).

Eight players died at Munich and two others never played again, so it was a desperately weakened team that appeared in the first match in Europe after the tragedy, one that was further handicapped by England's insensitive decision to take Bobby Charlton on a pre-World Cup tour.

Years but little hope accompanied the red shirts on to the field five days after they had lost the FA Cup final, and things looked even more gloomy when Milan took the lead after 24 minutes. United were being run ragged.

Then, five minutes from half-time, the present coach

the Italian national team. Cesare Maldini, misplaced Cesare, passed and Dennis Viollet changed the mood of the match as an equalizer. United scored at Milan. Ernie Taylor, winning the winner from the penalty spot 11 minutes after the first goal. United won the match 1-0. Maldini. "I've never seen a crowd set off with a sense of victory like this," Terence Elliott wrote in the *Daily Express*. The second leg six days later proved how shallow the display of sympathy can be. The Italian crowd yelled the United players with vegetables as they took the field for the second leg. At Milan, mindful of their treatment at Old Trafford, they returned their revenge. "Most of them were glad to escape with a 1-0 defeat," Bill Fowler wrote. "We had run out of national steam."

[illegible]

...winding the bulk of
the Argentine national
flag would reach the
top of the World
Trade Center 110
months later. Most
likely had Eusebio, a
man regarded as
legendary by Pele.
Eusebio's languid looking
face as a needle, made
him a perfect fit for
Benfica's goals.
He scored 1-0 ahead on
his first try and reducing
his advantage after
another goal. Law and
Eusebio had given the
team a 3-1 lead. Unfor-
tunately, the bar twice
crashed the net. The
side in the closing

European Cup
goalkeeper
leg (2. November)
Manchester
to 2 (United
goalkeeper)

Amid
match, for a
few minutes
and was
rived harsh
ford, forth
lead, and
mess, forth
third round

In the first
forward call
tortured the
fence, scoring
54 minutes,
Nicholl then
off the line."
hard, very hard
ton, the team
said, but I re-
it's impossible

...the winners' around second base, **Barrio**, 1977's United 5 for 4, and 1981's **United 6-5 on** against the

...list of great acts should be serious failure, as worthy of this. Porto in **Barrio** Old-Time with a 4.0 is a disrespected to reach the

...leg a centred and **Duck** had United led a hat-trick in while **Jimmy** had to clear the **Barrio** is going to be d. **Dave Sexton** manager, **Barrio** to believe

Sexton would be dismissed for being too, but there was inhibition in the where **United** the impossible achieved it. **Barrio** gave them the eight minutes though **Barrio** soon afterwards firmed to plummet into, going back

Two more, just with the Porto did terrible state any have happened who ended all the horrible past **Barrio** and Arthur Albion 34th minute, not finished, **United** forcing **United** to own goal of

We were caught out by away goals," **Barrio**

later he got two-point-one as his time in the home-kept and nearly equalized by Coppell ahead, after which he equalised again; they continued the visit to 4-4.

In the second two, and three, the home team had a chance, but nothing could come of it until Semmle took a shot with him in the backcourt in the fourth quarter in which he was fouled were fouled by Peterson and he made it to his second point in the game.

The crowd of over two thousand, as the referee said,

European Cup-Winner's Cup quarter-final leg (21 March, 1968) Manchester United 3-2 Arsenal (United won 3-2 on aggregate).

This display was described by Ron Kidd as "the finest by a United while he was manager" and "Down 2-0 he was against a Barcelona side that included Di Stefano and Bernd Schuster appeared to have only the lucky pot chance, with the fact that the struggle leaves himself open to further attack."

What had been to the debris of a disastering first leg was that Robson had squandered a golden opportunity to start his comeback if he did not.

players' second season in Maryland. "I agree," said assistant coach as de-
mon as the side manager. "The first leg was on the side of the Mar-
shals, but to have a coach's pro-
prio is usually to be re-
sponsible for the defeat." he said. "Big games are all about putting the ball into the net."
Robson played like a star man possessed at Old Traf-
ford, imposing his pres-
ence on Schuster while
Benni Moses was marked.
Maradona and Ray Wilkins
had one of his finest matches
in a recent Uplift. "I
Norman Whiteside went vir-
tually every ball in the air."
Ahead after 24 minutes
thanked to Robson's header.
Frank went ahead in the
first half with goals in two
minutes early in the second
half. Robson made it 2-0,
then Frank Stapleton got
the third. Schuster went
close and Maradona had a
last-minute shot saved by
Gary Breheny. United
made it to their seventh En-
glish semi-final.

Mark Hughes is being offered a VIP package by Chelsea to persuade him to sign a new two-year deal. The FA Cup finalists are pulling out all the stops to keep Hughes, whose family have returned to the Manchester area. The offer would allow Hughes to spend much of the week up North with free transport laid on to London. Chelsea will give Hughes shuttle tickets and a chauffeur to pick him up from the airport on the days he is needed for training and

games. The Welsh striker is likely to accept despite interest from Bolton and will commit himself before the final.

One striker poised to leave his club is Mike Sheron, ready to follow Lou Macari out of Stoke City and sign for Queen's Park Rangers at the end of the season for £2.5m. Sheron wants to leave in the summer and QPR have reopened talks with Stoke to pair him with John Spencer.

Stewart Houston, the QPR manager, is confident of success

after Macari blocked a deal before the deadline.

Sheron knows there is a lucrative deal on offer at Loftus Road with £1m in signing-on fees alone. The former England Under-21 striker will be a likely replacement for Trevor Sinclair, who is ready to move in the summer.

Reading look likely to commit their management double act of Jimmy Quinn and Mick Gooding to two-year contracts after clear the air talks follow-

The pair were shocked to find a circular had been put out about them and immediately held crisis talks with their employers. The club claimed the fax was a mistake or a hoax, but two separate official letters had been sent with their names down as being released.

Steffen Iversen, Tottenham £2.6m Norwegian striker, is the latest White Hart Lane player to go under the surgeon's knife and be ruled out for the rest of the season. Iversen was facing an operation last night to remove a cyst from the inside of his kneecap.

The Spurs manager, Gerry Francis, who had 13 senior players unavailable through injury for last Saturday's 1-1 draw at Aston Villa, admitted: "We are getting used to this sort of

thing, I am afraid." Chris Anderson, strong, John Scales, Ramon Vega and Darren Anderson are among the top players who have had long injury lay-offs. Spurs this season.

To add to this their form in England Under-21 centre back Stuart Nethercott, is also out the remainder of the campaign after damaging knee ligaments in a reserve game. Francis has been forced to blood youngsters such as Paul McVeigh and Neale Fenn to cover the gaps.

and both could be in the side for tomorrow night's rearranged Premiership game at home to Middlesbrough.

The game has had to be squeezed in before international players report for World Cup duty at the weekend. So Middlesbrough would not have to play four matches in the last week of the season. Spurs could have both Anderton and the winger Ruel Fox, recovering from a knee injury, back for the match.

Tommy Burns is well aware of the importance of Celtic's Tenthments Scottish Cup semi-final replay against Falkirk, of the First Division, at Ibrox tonight. The Celtic manager is desperate for his team to crown their season with only the second trophy in three years and save his managerial career in Glasgow. Speculation is rife about Burns' future with a review of the "football department" by the chairman, Fergus McCann, due at the end of the season. Celtic have virtually lost their deal with Rangers for the league title and now only the cup can bring some silverware to the club this season.

Tom Boyd, the Celtic defender who lifted the trophy with Motherwell in 1991 and again with Celtic two years ago, says it is not a consolation prize.

"It won't be that if we win it, I can assure you. A major trophy like the Scottish Cup can never be described as that and there is a lot of history attached to the trophy and Celtic. The Scottish Cup final is the climax to the season and winning the cup can set you up for the summer and the following year. We all know what it would mean to the Celtic supporters," Boyd said.

What it might mean to Burns is more open to question with

the portents suggesting that even delivering the trophy might not be enough to prevent a change of role at best for the 40-year-old former midfielder.

Burns has some decisions to make for his semi-final line-up with the new £2.4m signing, Tommy Johnson, who marked his full debut in the 1-1 draw between the clubs 10 days ago with his first goal, likely to be fit again. Peter Grant and Malky Mackay are available after missing the first game through suspension while the captain, Paul McStay, is battling for fitness after a groin injury. Enrico Annunzi is rated more doubtful.

Meanwhile Alex Totten, the

Falkirk manager, has less to concern himself with — except that arguments that suggest a lower-division team never benefit from a second chance against the Old Firm in a cup-tie.

"Everybody says you don't get two bites at the cherry against the Old Firm but the fact is we must try and go one better than we did in the first match. I know we will have to be at our very best but I think we have a real chance of beating Celtic."

Totten will lean heavily again on the experience of the 33-year-old former England international Andy Gray, who excelled in the Ibrox atmosphere last week.

Gigi Simoni, the coach-elect of the Italian *Serie A* club, Internazionale, has been dismissed by Napoli.

The Neapolitan club, officially reacting to a streak of disappointing results but most angered by Simoni's decision to leave the team at the end of the season, sacked the veteran coach on Monday and replaced him with the junior team trainer, Vincenzo Montefusco.

Simoni, 58, became the seventh coach to be discharged during the present campaign. His dismissal came a few days after Internazionale announced that he will coach the Milan team in the 1997-98 campaign.

Simoni will replace Roy Hoogmoed, who is leaving the Italian national team to coach the Netherlands national team. Napoli, who had climbed to 11th in the league, was high as to second place in the Italian league earlier this season, are 13th following a string of 10 defeats, including a home upset against Atalanta on Sunday.

Fabio Capello, the Real Madrid coach who arrived in Milan yesterday for a two-week visit, has been linked with a return to his former club, Milan. Capello, who left Milan to join the Spanish club last year, said he did not plan to meet the club president, Silvio Berlusconi.

any other club official during his stay. However, Italian sports daily *L'Espresso* this week that an agreement for Capello's comeback has been already reached.

"I returned to Milan to see my sons and to discuss some tax problems with my lawyers," Capello told reporters. "I won't discuss Milan's present problems. At the moment, I'm only thinking of a successful end of season with Real. The [Spanish League] title is close, but not certain. Until a final decision is taken, I'll no longer discuss any possible transfer either in Italy or in Spain," he said.

The Italian coach, who led Milan to five league titles in five

Goodway makes way at Oldham

Rugby League

DAVE HADFIELD

The Oldham coach, Andy Goodway, has become the latest Super League casualty by leaving his job with eight months of his contract to run.

Goodway will be replaced by the Australian Bob Lindner who was Oldham's player-coach in 1994. His departure, which was described as being "by amicable agreement", but which was at the board's instigation, also sees his No 2 Alan McCurrie, leave Boundary Park.

Oldham have won just one Super League game this season and their chairman, Jim Quinn, said: "Things have not been right behind the scenes since Andy threatened to quit after the defeat at Salford."

Lindner, an Australian Test forward, will arrive by the end

of the week, if work permit for malities can be completed in time, and would then take charge for the home fixture against Halifax. Until then, the fitness conditioner, Andrew Jackson, and players Martin Crompton and Matt Munro will oversee preparations.

Goodway is the fifth Super League coach to go in the two months since the start of the season, following Wigan's Graeme West, Steve Simms at Halifax, John Dorahy at Warrington and Castleford's John Joyner.

A scan on the hamstring injury suffered by the St Helens centre Alan Hunte has confirmed that there is a tear, but he could still be fit for the Challenge Cup final on Saturday.

Brook Derek McVey, the Saints forward out of action since damaging ankle ligaments on Good Friday, has described his chances of missing his

time for Wembley as "better than average".

Mike Forshaw, the former Wigan and Wakefield forward who has been playing for Saracens, has joined Bradford.

The game in Australia has lost a major sponsor as the result of a brawl in a television match between two schools. The Commonwealth Bank, Australia's second largest bank - which has supported the knock-out competition between secondary schools since 1981 - has stopped its £50,000 a year backing following a vicious punch-up involving two Brisbane sides.

"The bank does not condone violent behaviour and cannot find this completely unacceptable," it said in a statement.

Twelve players from one school have been suspended for periods ranging from one week to 12 months.

[illegible]

To move forward
do we have to leave
the present?

Documercial
Channel

A new start for the old Championship and 'Syd'

The amachronism that is the County Championship throws open its doors to the public once more this morning, and once more the public will be conspicuous only by its absence. While television continues to pump more and more money into the game in this country, newspapers devote more space to it and Test matches sell out faster than ever before, the County Championship plods on in its own peculiar way, defying the laws of good business. By this time next year, the

Championship may be unrecognisable from what we have known for the past 100 years. "There are some amber lights flashing over our game and we have to respond," says Lord MacLaurin, chairman of the newly established English Cricket Board. But for the moment everything is just about how it always was and Leicestershire, as champions, may find life uncomfortable in the opening weeks. Phil Simmons, such a pivotal figure last season, will not be available before the end of May, and they

are considering filling his all-rounder's boots with Neil Johnson, a South African. Should Leicestershire bat first today at Grace Road, they are likely to be confronted by David "Syd" Lawrence, playing his first Championship match in five years. Lawrence, now 33, has made a most unlikely recovery after twice breaking his kneecap. Fingers will be crossed for a popular man as he charges in with that familiar all-in wrestling action of his. There are, as ever, a number

of young players of whom great things are expected, and this summer they all seem to play for Surrey: their new captain Adam Holoake, his baby brother Ben, England's latest fast bowling hope Alex Tudor, Mark Butcher, an opener already knocking on England's door. Surrey are so strong that, even without an overseas player, they can afford to leave the younger Holoake and Alistair Brown out of their side to face Dermot Reeve's Somerset at The Oval today. Reeve's former team-mates at Warwickshire might be back to something like their fighting weight, now that Allan Donald has returned to spearhead the attack. Under their new captain, Tim Munton, they are the bookies' early favourites. Today's visit to Cardiff will be a strange way

Higgins knuckles down to the grind of fame game

The first time John Higgins met Alex Higgins, the Hurricane left his mark. The young Scot had just lost to Jimmy White and to get a word of consolation from the great would have made a difference. Instead he got: "If you don't learn to play with side, you'll never be in my class." Those with a generous spirit would ascribe Higgins' words as a helpful hint or maybe a gentle nudge towards the toughness required to survive at snooker's top table. John Higgins will have none of it. "I thought he would come up and say 'bad luck, you played well'. He was one of my heroes, someone I looked up to, and he was slagging me off. I think he was wary because another Higgins was coming along." Higgins, 21, has long since moved out of Alex's contro-

versal shadow. Indeed, with Peter Ebdon already history he represents the most likely player to wrench the World Championship from Stephen Hendry's grasp. Last night, he was facing the world No.113, Graham Horne, after which Tony Drago and either Ken Doherty or Steve Davis are likely to provide the opposition. It is a path to the semi-finals that is well within the world No.2's compass and yet the expectation placed on his head is less than it has been for two years. In 1995 and 1996 he arrived as Hendry's great danger, but lost to Alan McManus (10-3) and Ronnie O'Sullivan (13-12). The pressure is on others. "I've left Sheffield twice feel-

ing deeply disappointed and I don't think people expect me to win it now," he said. "The first time I just sat there watching Alan thinking all the things a fan does. You know 'this is where my heroes have played', or 'isn't the Crucible small'. My mind wasn't on the job at all. "Last year I lost a bad match to Ronnie. I was 10-6 ahead and you shouldn't lose to anyone from that position. It hurt me a lot. The way I was playing I really thought I was going to win the title. "The 1996-97 season has been a strange one for Higgins. He says his snooker is far short of the mark he knows he can achieve and yet he won the European Open in Malta in March

and has earned more than £220,000 in prize-money. This on top of changing his cue at the turn of the year. Golfers might be fickle with their clubs, but snooker players regard the tool of their trade as an extension of their arms and change them with great reluctance. Higgins had owned his since he was a child, but years of adding bits and replacing the tips had taken their toll and eventually the wrench had to be made. On the cue's first outing, Hendry was beaten. "It was not the only change. "When you are losing first-round matches it hurts a lot," he said. "You dismiss it as everyone goes through a bad patch, but I think that something was wrong. Changing the cue is probably one of the best things I've done. I was experimenting too much, having bits chopped off or added on. It was silly. At the end of the day I wasn't putting in the length and quality of practice I should've been doing. "I was enjoying myself too much, going out at most weekends having a laugh, which, as a professional sportsman in the middle of a season, you can't afford to do. You need to be a different person, a different breed to become No.1. You need to train, stay in every night, practise all the time. "Hendry, of course, is his exemplar. "Stephen's had a baby and that has changed him a little, but before that his life was snooker, snooker, snooker. If



Eye on the table: John Higgins focuses on the world title

Waugh attacks England

England's leading cricket players lack toughness and the hunger to succeed and do not combine well as a team, according to Mark Waugh, the Australian batsman. In comments likely to inflame old rivalries in the upcoming Ashes tour, Waugh predicted Australia would exploit those weaknesses to record an easy win in the six-Test series. "I look at the England team on paper and think they are good players, but they aren't tough enough or hungry enough on the field," said Waugh in an interview in an Australian magazine published yesterday. "They don't play as a team. They worry about themselves. When you're out there, you don't feel you've got 11 guys against you," Waugh added. "Man for man they are not that far behind us, but they lack hunger." Waugh, a veteran of 63 Tests, said England miss a quality spinner, dismissing Phil Tufnell as a threat. "Off-spinner Robert Croft is probably the best - I rate him highly. Phil Tufnell is back in the fray but I don't see him as a danger. I see him as a fairly weak sort of player who relies on you to make a mistake. He's not going to get you out." But there was praise for one English cricketer - Yorkshire's Darren Gough. "He's always trying 100 per cent, having a go, trying a bumper, a slower ball. If he starts bowling well, he's a dangerous man because he can lift the rest of the team."

McManus fights back from brink

Alan McManus, the world No.6, yesterday fought back from the brink of a first-round defeat at the Crucible Theatre, Sheffield, to beat his fellow Scot Billy Snaddon 10-9 in the deciding frame and reach the last 16 of the Embassy World Championship. When he trailed 8-4 and 9-8 there appeared no way back for the 26-year-old Glaswegian. In a game lasting seven hours and seven minutes, McManus was never in front until he potted the

opening red of the deciding 19th frame. He went on to add a vital run of 34 and later fluked the final brown to leave Snaddon requiring snookers. Snaddon will be kicking himself for letting McManus escape. He began the match on Monday with a break of 131 during an early 3-0 lead. He finished the first session 5-3 up and continued to improve early on yesterday. Two frames turned the match in McManus's favour. A clear-

ance of 65 from 58-0 down enabled him to win frame 13 and he just managed to take the 14th when Snaddon, clearing up, potted the yellow only to see the cue ball go in-off. McManus later missed the pink, but so too did Snaddon, and by eventually securing the frame 70-49 he was back in contention. Snaddon was to win only one more frame, the 17th, before nerves and McManus's relentless pressure finally finished him.

I've been out the night before I'd wake up next morning thinking maybe I can't be bothered going to the snooker hall. That's maybe the difference between me and him. He'd be at the club on a Sunday morning. "If I'm going to beat Stephen I'll have to work as hard. You have a few years after snooker when I can enjoy myself. I have to put that on the back burner." Since January, Higgins has put in the hours on the practice table and if his first-round defeat at the British Open three weeks ago was not encouraging, it might be attributed to the emphasis he places on the World Championship. He knows, he says, that his best form would put Hendry within his range. "Stephen didn't play that well last year and he still won," he said. "Which shows he's head and shoulders ahead of us."

Baseball
AMERICAN LEAGUE: Boston 4 Baltimore 2; New York Yankees 4 Chicago White Sox 3; Detroit 7 Texas 6; Anaheim 5 Toronto 4 (122 innings); Seattle 6 Kansas City 5.
NATIONAL LEAGUE: Philadelphia 10 Pittsburgh 2; Chicago Cubs 6 New York Mets 4.

Baseball II
NATIONAL LEAGUE CHAMPIONSHIPS (Series)
Bostons lead: Philadelphia 3, Boston 2 (74 innings); Yankees 3, Yankees 2 (100 innings).

Baseball III
The USS Intrepid will see its first fighting in decades next year when the retired aircraft carrier serves as the unique site of the boxing competition for the Goodwill Games. A temporary 3,300-seat arena will be set up on the enormous flight deck of the carrier, which is docked on the New York side of the Hudson River. The Games take place in New York City and Long Island from 19 July-2 August 1998.

Cricket
John Joseph has stepped down after seven years as chairman of the county champions, Leicestershire, and will be replaced by Roger Goodby. David Collier has been appointed chief executive.

TODAY'S NUMBER
23

The percentage of first serves out of 22 - that Boris Becker managed in the second set of his 1-6, 6-3, 7-6 victory over Italy's Rocco Pietrangeli in the first round of the Monte Carlo Open yesterday.

Baseball IV
AMERICAN LEAGUE: Boston 4 Baltimore 2; New York Yankees 4 Chicago White Sox 3; Detroit 7 Texas 6; Anaheim 5 Toronto 4 (122 innings); Seattle 6 Kansas City 5.
NATIONAL LEAGUE: Philadelphia 10 Pittsburgh 2; Chicago Cubs 6 New York Mets 4.

Baseball V
NATIONAL LEAGUE CHAMPIONSHIPS (Series)
Bostons lead: Philadelphia 3, Boston 2 (74 innings); Yankees 3, Yankees 2 (100 innings).

Baseball VI
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Baseball VII
AMERICAN LEAGUE: Boston 4 Baltimore 2; New York Yankees 4 Chicago White Sox 3; Detroit 7 Texas 6; Anaheim 5 Toronto 4 (122 innings); Seattle 6 Kansas City 5.
NATIONAL LEAGUE: Philadelphia 10 Pittsburgh 2; Chicago Cubs 6 New York Mets 4.

Baseball VIII
NATIONAL LEAGUE CHAMPIONSHIPS (Series)
Bostons lead: Philadelphia 3, Boston 2 (74 innings); Yankees 3, Yankees 2 (100 innings).

Baseball IX
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Baseball X
AMERICAN LEAGUE: Boston 4 Baltimore 2; New York Yankees 4 Chicago White Sox 3; Detroit 7 Texas 6; Anaheim 5 Toronto 4 (122 innings); Seattle 6 Kansas City 5.
NATIONAL LEAGUE: Philadelphia 10 Pittsburgh 2; Chicago Cubs 6 New York Mets 4.

Baseball XI
NATIONAL LEAGUE CHAMPIONSHIPS (Series)
Bostons lead: Philadelphia 3, Boston 2 (74 innings); Yankees 3, Yankees 2 (100 innings).

Baseball XII
The USS Intrepid will see its first fighting in decades next year when the retired aircraft carrier serves as the unique site of the boxing competition for the Goodwill Games. A temporary 3,300-seat arena will be set up on the enormous flight deck of the carrier, which is docked on the New York side of the Hudson River. The Games take place in New York City and Long Island from 19 July-2 August 1998.

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Four men in a boat
Redgrave and Pinsent
take their partners, page 28

sport

The Glory Games
Old Trafford's Euro nights
to remember, page 30

Old Trafford has Dortmund at a disadvantage

Football

GLENN MOORE

Borussia Dortmund will arrive at Old Trafford tonight with reason to be envious. It will not be the vast, tiered stands which make them jealous, Dortmund have an impressive ground of their own. Nor will it be the glittering opposition, Dortmund have internationals in abundance.

What United have, and Dortmund lack, is the knowledge that barring a series of bizarre results they will be in next season's

Champions' League regardless of the result in this season's semi-final second leg tonight. United, in beating Liverpool on Saturday, all but confirmed their place as one of the elite eight automatic entrants. Dortmund also played their biggest rivals at the weekend but could only draw at home to Bayern Munich. They now trail Munich by six points with six matches to play. Nor can Dortmund even be sure of reaching the qualifying round as the Bundesliga's second-placed club. They are currently third, three points behind Bayer Leverkusen.

The difference is important for tonight's match will probably be decided by the subsequent reactions of the two sides. Will United, knowing they have a second chance next year, and having got as far as anyone expected this time, be able to relax and play their natural game as they did in thrashing Porto? Or will they lose their edge? Will Dortmund - who have a number of older players - have their resilience stiffened by the thought that this may be their last chance of glory? Or will that unsettle them?

Dortmund have one other

reason to envy United. The German champions, as in the first leg, have much greater injury problems. The talismanic Matthias Sammer, suspended the first time, is injured, as are fellow defenders Julio Cesar, Rene Schneider and Stefan Freund. Jürgen Kohler, who missed the first leg through injury, and the Ghanaian striker, Ibrahim Tanko, were both on the sick list last night and were left in Germany, although they both hope to fly into Manchester this morning. Even if Tanko is fit he will probably start on the bench, as both Karlheinz

Riedle and Stéphane Chapuisat are fit. United, having rested four players on Saturday, pick from an almost full squad. Only the suspended Roy Keane is unavailable, and the manager Alex Ferguson's concern is whether to start with Ryan Giggs, fit again, along with David May and Dennis Irwin, and retain Ronny Johnsen at the back after his display against Liverpool.

But Dortmund do have something precious which United covet. They have Rene Trechok's first-leg goal. The goal means Dortmund need

only score once to make United score three times. United may have done that against Liverpool but it is hard, though not impossible, to imagine a defence marshalled by Kohler and Stefan Reuter defending as badly as Liverpool did.

So United will have to be careful as they roar forward. One slip at the back and the dream of emulating the 1968 winners is over. But not too careful. "I don't think we'll be good at being really patient, trying to make sure they don't score and worrying about losing a goal," Ferguson said. "There has to be a high de-

gree of concentration and defensive discipline. But there has to be something about our game which reflects Manchester United and the ability of the team. "We want the level of performance we showed against Porto. We're capable of that. I keep saying to these players 'Reach your capabilities'. Dortmund are also unlikely to retreat into their shells, despite their advantage. "Our one goal won't be enough," their coach, Ottmar Hitzfeld, said. "We will need to come out and attack and I think we will need one or two more goals to get to the final."

Indeed, both teams are attacking by nature and the Old Trafford pitch is far better than Dortmund's - which affected the quality of the first match. United have the capacity to win but may come to rue the chances they missed a fortnight ago. Ferguson knows that United have been slow starters in Europe, but believes his young side have learnt valuable lessons. "It's not like going into the torture chamber, it's not that painful," he said. "They start to enjoy it." It remains to be seen whether their enjoyment will last until the final whistle.

Brighton end the weeks of feuding

ALAN NIXON

Dick Knight took over as chairman of Brighton yesterday and immediately announced plans for a state-of-the-art 25,000-seat stadium in two years' time.

After 20 weeks of mediation, the Brighton dispute was finally resolved by a restructuring of the club. A new shareholding was agreed, allowing the Knight consortium and the present owners, including Bill Archer, to own a 49.5 per cent stake each, with the McAlpine director, Martin Perry, taking the remaining one per cent.

Paul Gascoigne has played down suggestions that Walter Smith is ready to bring the England midfielder's Rangers career to an end. Smith has accused Gascoigne of tarnishing the club's image with his off-field exploits. The manager's comment has fuelled speculation that he is ready to sell Gascoigne, whose contract has a year to run, in the summer.

However, Gascoigne, who has been left out of England's squad for next week's World Cup qualifier against Georgia, said: "I don't know what all the fuss is about. I've spoken to Walter and everything is brand new." But not his contact, presumably.

Jack Walker, the owner of Blackburn Rovers, has put a block on Graeme Le Saux leaving the club and moving to Ar-

senal. Walker is digging in his heels over the unsettled left-back who was brought back into the Rovers side against Sheffield Wednesday last night.

Le Saux was dropped last week and trained with the reserves after falling out with Rovers' caretaker manager, Tony Parkes. However, Walker has insisted that the England defender cannot go despite interest from Arsenal.

Jorge Cadete, Celtic's Portuguese striker, has escaped with a reprimand from the Scottish Football Association after he threw his jersey into the crowd at the end of a league match with Dunfermline last month. The SFA disciplinary committee told him of their "extreme displeasure" at his disregard of an instruction from police not to stir up the fans.

Scotland's coach, Craig Brown, is likely to witness at close hand the man who has recently gained such a reputation in England for his man-marking skills. His Swedish counterpart, Tommy Svensson, has recalled Leicester's Pontus Karmark to his squad for the first time in 18 months for the 30 April World Cup qualifier between the two in Gothenburg. Svensson was no doubt impressed by the close-marking job Karmark did on Middlesbrough's Brazilian inspiration, Juninho, in the Coca-Cola Cup final and the replay.

Swedish squad, Digest, page 31



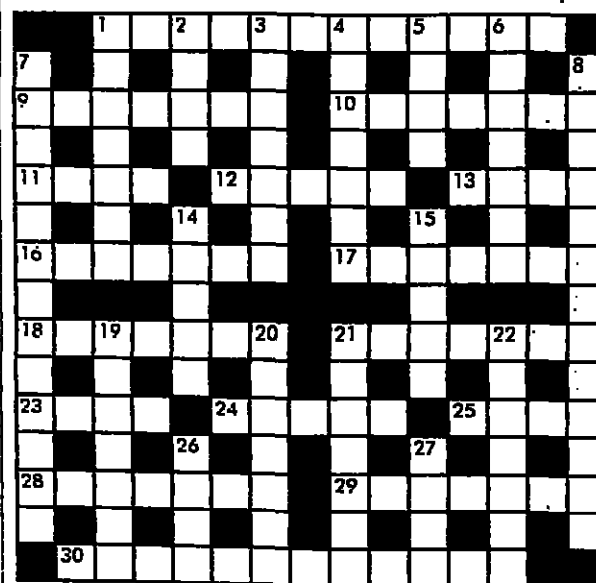
In the groove: Pakistan's Saqlain Mushtaq leans into his drive during his innings of 58 on the fourth day of the first Test against Sri Lanka in Colombo. The tourists were all out for 378 in reply to Sri Lanka's first-innings total of 330. Photograph: AP

THE INDEPENDENT CROSSWORD

No 3288, Wednesday 23 April

By Aquila

Tuesday's Solution



EDUCATED GUESSES
A A P R E U L U
S I C K E A V E A B E A M
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P A T Y B A A A
E N N O I P U B L I C B A R
R C V S E F L R N
W H E E L E R D E A T E R

ACROSS

- Best prayer in unorthodox church (12)
- Hot-rod driver, once common in shipyards (7)
- Not well, having broken a leg under the counter (7)
- Old and new (4)
- Thrill in punts? (5)
- Wine among the last imported (4)
- In favour of melody from Kismet (7)
- One is put into orbit for a brighter outlook (7)
- Deliver sales slip (7)
- Dead for musicians, having no head for sherry (7)
- Can of beer down under subway (4)
- Strength of foreign wines? (5)

DOWN

- Golfers turning top, perhaps, having got a four? (7)
- Common grub found among wheat-stalks (4)
- End of measure to decipher linear B (3-4)
- Slow sort of charge to deceive the French? (7)
- Bank of river on cathedral city (4)
- In this state, university-headgear is back to front (4)
- One of those eastern dishes sometimes preferred to sultanas? (7)
- Vocabulary of Roman law figure (7)
- Go mad in such a store? (12)
- Imposing American golf centre? (7)
- Escalation in favour of time-share (13)
- Half the doings disguised in this skill? (7,2,4)
- Does this game bird have cold feet? (5)
- I need the end of good to turn me on (5)
- American banknotes used in the Savoy? (7)
- Brake closely-packed, leaving son behind (7)
- Rest upon accomplished fiction (7)
- Scottish governor a learner when producing light (7)
- Maggie with abnormal appetite (4)
- Former wife, with sex appeal, giving vent (4)

Setback for Becker

Tennis

Boris Becker made an inauspicious start to his clay-court season when he lost in the first round of the Monte Carlo Open yesterday. The former Wimbledon champion was beaten 1-6, 6-3, 7-6 by Italy's Renzo Furlan.

Back on clay for the first time in a season so far marred by injuries, Becker made a good start but soon found it difficult adapting to the slow surface and bowed out in just over two hours.

The loss may not be a surprise since Becker, ranked 12th in the world, only resumed playing in Tokyo last week after a two-month break because of tendonitis. He had also complained of thigh pains in Tokyo. But the defeat, in only his sixth match this year, was a further setback for the German, who has lost three finals in Monte Carlo.

"He was very good in the first set, especially at the net. And then he started playing poorly and I realised I only needed to play solid tennis," Furlan, ranked 65 in the world, said. "It's a big disappointment because I was so close to a win but to be so close when I served so poorly was a surprise," Becker said.

Two other players whose season has been hampered by injury are Britain's Tim Henman and Greg Rusedski. They were back on the practice courts at Queen's Club, London, yesterday searching for full fitness. Henman, who last played in the Lipton Championships in Key Biscayne five weeks ago when he lost to Spanish qualifier Julian Alonso, has remained at No 15 in the world, although several of his closest rivals have narrowed the points gap. Rusedski has played just two matches in two comeback attempts since hurting his wrist in the San

Jose final against Pete Sampras in February, but he has dropped only four places, from 36 to 40.

Arthroscopic surgery appears to have healed Henman's right elbow, and he felt no pain yesterday. "There was no pain whatsoever, which is a pleasing sign," he said.

Now he will continue to practise regularly, although he does not intend to play in any tournaments until the Italian Open in Rome in mid-May. Rusedski was hoping to get back earlier than Rome but is still undecided about his plans.

While Henman and Rusedski are limbering up again, Andrew Richardson, the Lincolnshire left-hander, has gone up 28 places in the world rankings from 262 to 234. This follows his exploits in the ATP Tour event in Tokyo last week when he came through the qualifying rounds and then beat Sweden's Tomas Nydahl in the first round of the main draw.

Woods proud to be 'Cablinasian'

Golf

MARY DEJEVSKY
reports from Washington

Tiger Woods, the new darling of the US media following his record victory in the US Masters 10 days ago, is using his new-found celebrity to do good - ever so gently - his overnight elevation to black sporting icon.

Asked by the almost equally popular black television interviewer, Oprah Winfrey, whether it bothered him to be called "African-American" - the current politically correct term for black people in America - Woods replied: "It does... I'm just who I am, whoever you see in front of you."

He said that as a child, he

coined a term, "Cablinasian" to describe his background, a blend of Caucasian, black, Indian and Asian. His father is black and his mother Thai, but Woods is actually one quarter black, one quarter Thai, one quarter Chinese, one-eighth white and one-eighth Native American Indian. He has taken his mother's religion, Buddhism.

That he was immediately hailed as the first "black" Masters champion reflects the US craving to find black success stories. But it has also prompted comment: why, asked one letter-writer to a major newspaper, was Woods not hailed as the first "Asian" Masters victor?

And in an incident that showed what black golfers might be up against on the professional

circuit, one of America's best-known golf personalities, Fuzzy Zoeller, was forced to apologise on national television for off-hand remarks he had made about Woods to a reporter from the news channel CNN, which were not broadcast at the time.

Zoeller had called Woods "that little boy" and said jokingly that he hoped he would not order fried chicken for the champions' dinner next year. Choosing the menu is the prerogative of the reigning champion and fried chicken is considered the staple food of poor black Southerners.

Clearly embarrassed, Zoeller apologised; he said that everyone on the circuit knew him as a joker and his remarks were not intended to be "racially derogatory".

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